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T. J. SMITH, HATTER

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A PLAY IN FOUR ACTS,

—BY—

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HENRY S. CATON,

—AUTHOR OF—

*“Queen Bertha,” “A Passing Storm,” “Cousin
Vance,” &c.*

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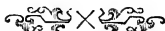
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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MR. T. J. SMITH.....A hatter—55 years old.
CHARLES.....His son—20 years old.
LORD LYNDON.....30 years old—son of Lady Lyndon.
CAPT. JOHNSON.....Of the merchant navy—55 years old.
ADMIRAL LYNDON...Uncle to Lord Lyndon—60 years old.
HORACE GRAHAM }Friends of Charles
AUGUSTUS CLAVERLAND }
LORRINER.....A hand in Smith's store.
RYAN.....A servant.
SKINNER.....A money-lender
TOM.....Apprentice.
MR. COMPTON.
MR. BLANCHARD.

MRS. SMITH.....Wife to T. J. Smith.
MARGARET.....Her daughter.
LADY LYNDON.....Mother to Lord Lyndon—55 years old.
OPHELIA.....A young milliner.
TWO YOUNG LADIES.

T. J. SMITH, HATTER.



PLACE.—*London, at the present time.*

ACT I.

The scene represents the back store of a hatter's establishment. In the rear, one can see through a glass partition, the front store, show cases with hats, counters, &c., and the door with the name "T. J. Smith" written backwards; also a glimpse of the street can be had through the door and windows of the store. A door in the partition leads to the front store. On the right, a winding staircase leading to rooms above. A side door, on the right, leads outside. In the front, tables are covered with unfinished hats, band-boxes, irons, linings, &c., &c.

LORRINER. (*holding a hat and speaking through the glass door that leads to the store.*) All right, sir; all right! It will be ready in time. I'll have it done. (*closing the door*) There! Mr. Smith is gone!—now for a rest! Tom!

Enter TOM from the store.

TOM. Sir?

LOR. (*sitting and giving him the hat*) Here, press that out.

TOM. (*taking the hat*) I thought so! you always give me your work to do as soon as master steps out.

LOR. None of your impudence! *Stulte!*

TOM. You are always speaking Latin!

LOR. A splendid language! The only one worth speaking, in fact! *aurea dicta!* I have grown proficient in it by being constantly in the company of Mr. Charles,

who has been to all the highest colleges in England! You ought to follow my example and improve your speech.

TOM. Oh! English is good enough for me! besides, I have no time; what with doing what master tells me and your work, too, into the bargain —

LOR. Master? what an inelegant word—it implies slavery—*servitus*! besides it does not decline—never use a word that does not decline, it is a bad one for sure; now “employer” is good—you can decline it: *employus*, employer, *employum*—decline, always decline!

TOM. I decline to decline!

LOR. Ignoramus!—

TOM. Look here! no names, d’ye hear?—or I’ll decline pressing this hat for you! and you can press, *pressa*, *pressum* that hat, *hata*, *hatum* yourself! (*a pause*) Now Mr. Lorriner, what is the use of Latin to make hats?

LOR. Speak for yourself, you simpleton! Hats! do you think I am going to pass my life making hats?—No, child, I am ambitious! *Gloria avidissimus sum*! When I see Mr. Smith, who never knew anything but his trade, taught to him by his father, piling up money, piling up consideration, becoming president of the hatters’ guild, vice-president of the Board of Health, Commissioner for the Royal Exhibition, chairman of the Committee on Colonial Fur Products and only having to bide his time to be Lord Mayor—for Mrs. Smith is dying to be my Lady Mayoress—when I see Mr. Charles, his son, becoming a lawyer, only through speaking Latin, and in course of time able to sit in Parliament and be Premier, when I see all this, I say to myself, why can’t I, a hatter’s first hand, possessing education and Latin, soar as high and even higher! *excelsior*! (*the cry of “counter,” from within*) Counter! don’t you hear, dunce! *Asine*! Fly! *Afi*! (*Exit Tom*) Of course (*pressing*) I am not going to press hats all my life! I hate hats! I wish there wasn’t such a thing in the world as a hat!—(*crushes the hat with the iron*) there, there, that is the way I’d like to press them!

Enter CHARLES and HORACE.

CHARLES. (*running up behind Lorriner and kicking him*) Why don’t you kick ’em too!

LOR. (*rubbing himself*) Kickus, Kicka, Kickum!

HORACE. *Bene applicatum*, eh, Lorriner!

CHARLES. (*slapping Lorriner on the shoulder*) I say, old fellow, did my father ask after me since yesterday?

LOR. Yes, sir, several times; but I answered him as had been agreed, that, in the day, you had gone to the law school for a special debate——

HOR. Good—debate! otherwise called Derby! very good!

LOR. And in the evening, I said you had gone to a night session.

HOR. (*slapping Charles*) Splendid! so it was—a session in the pool room? Ain't we rascals? ha, ha?

LOR. (*slapping Charles*) Now ain't we though!

CHARLES (*seriously*) We are lucky if father does not find us out!

LOR. The missus! (*snatches a hat and brushes it violently*)

Enter MRS. SMITH—the same.

MRS. S. (*to Lorriner, coming down the staircase*) Well? what are you doing here? Your place is at the counter, when Mr. Smith is out! Why are you not there! don't you see there are customers?

LOR. (*aside*) Nuisance! (*dashes two hats together and crushes them, then disappears to re-enter soon, stealthily*).

MRS. S. Well, Charles, where have you been? I have not set my eyes on you since yesterday!

CHAS. I have had a spell of hard study. An early debate yesterday and a night session that lasted very late; and again to-day we have another early debate.

HOR. Indeed, it has been quite trying, ma'am; but you know we must go through these spells of hard study if we wish to succeed; we must keep ourselves posted on all new questions that arise in a legal way; in fact, Charles and myself we had studied the points for yesterday several days ahead!

CHAS. (*aside*) Horace is going too far!

MRS. S. If he was with you, Mr. Graham, I am quite satisfied. You are a little his senior and can help him in his studies.

HOR. I can show him but very few points, madam.

MRS. S. He is a clever boy, isn't he?

HOR. Clever! why there are moments that he can put the whole English bar to the blush!

CHAS. (*aside, annoyed*) He's actually laughing at my mother!

MRS. S. I am really glad to hear you say so!

CHAS. (*aside*) Poor mother!

MRS. S. And my husband who wanted to make him a hatter like himself!

HOR. (*shocked*) Oh! it would be suicide, ma'am; a case of moral suicide!

MRS. S. Well, you know, my husband is an excellent man, but he has his notions; his trade is every thing to him.

LOR. It's a regular frenzy with him!

MRS. S. Lorriner! to the counter! (*exit Lorriner and returns*) And so headstrong! Why it was only lately that we have persuaded him to change the hours of the family meals!—only since he has been elected member of the boards and committees—and see how we live! Of course we have every possible comfort—but no style!—look at the house!—over a store! in this horrible part of the city—all trade!

LOR. (*aside*) Her mother used to sell oranges in it!

MRS. S. When we could well afford an elegant mansion in the West End. No matter; he says he must live on the spot with his business; he wants to have an eye on the retail and wholesale trade and yet be home too; he says his father did so and thrived, and nothing can get him out of that! I think that when one is saving plenty of money and has inherited a fine fortune, as he did from his brother two years ago, if one does not leave off business altogether, one may at least do it with a certain style—For instance—he could drive in a coupe and we could live——

HOR. Near the set your daughter is destined to adorn!

MRS. S. Hush! (*looking round*) Lorriner! to the counter!

LOR. (*aside*) Always at the counter! Oh, what a life this is!

MRS. S. (*with a mysterious air*) Are you then in the secret, Mr. Graham?

CHAS. Why, certainly, mother; he is Lyndon's intimate friend.

MRS. S. (*delighted*) You don't say so?

HOR. Indeed I am, Mrs. Smith, Lord Lyndon and myself have been children together; he has confided to me his love for Charlie's sister; how he would come and buy a new hat every week and have some pressing done every second day in the hopes of seeing her—and how he made Charlie's acquaintance to be introduced——

MRS. S. Of course I began noticing all this.

HOR. How often he has spoken to me of you, of your kindness, your motherly care of him! how happy he would be if he could become nearer related to you!

MRS. S. So would I! Such a nice young man, with a title and a high position in the financial world at his age! Well, notwithstanding all these advantages, I have not dared to speak to my husband yet about him!

HOR. Why not?

MRS. S. My husband is an excellent man, Mr. Graham, and perfectly devoted to his family; he would give his life for his children; he has worked hard to lay by 100,000 pounds for both Maggie and Charlie to start them in life with; but he has queer notions!—he has nursed a pet fancy of his for years—he wishes Maggie to marry the nephew of an old friend of his—a druggist!

HOR. (*with disgust*) A druggist!

MRS. S. Yes, a nice fellow too, to be fair. I think Maggie would have liked him, and I myself was in favor of him for a long time; but since we came into a fortune, I thought I wouldn't encourage his visits much; between his business that has been increasing and my coldness to him, he has not been round of late. I do not wish Maggie to throw herself away on him! she can do better!

HOR. Of course she can! Why, I would not compare Lyndon to a druggist!—faugh!—but you have not forgotten, I hope, that to-day Lady Lyndon is coming to be introduced by her son and make a formal proposal for your daughter's hand? Mr. Smith ought to know.

MRS. S. I *must* speak to him to-day! there is no backing out of it—but I dread it, Mr. Graham, I really do dread it!

Enter MARGARET from staircase.

MAR. Mamma! mamma! here's papa! he is just turning the corner!

HOR. (to MRS. S.) Now, Mrs. Smith, now is the time!

MRS. S. I know it! I am come down for that purpose.

Enter SMITH through the store.

SMITH. Good morning, all! Why, Charlie, I see you at last! Good morning, Mr. Graham!—let me sit down, I am half dead with the heat!

MRS. S. (*fussing round him and fanning him with a newspaper*) Goodness gracious! how hot he is! Why, papa, where have you been running so?

SMITH. (*mopping his forehead*.) I have been in fifty places!—I don't mind going round for my business,—but all these meetings and boards to attend to! — and do you know?—they have just named me chairman of the Parish Charitable Association!

MRS. S. (*kissing him*) Have they?— I am so glad!—

SMITH.— Well, I am not. It will take me off my business dreadfully. I bet you, it is your own doing! You must have been round praising and puffing me!— I never knew a wife so anxious as you are, to get her husband into hot wateryou know I only wish to be let alone.....I am only happy here, when quiet in my workshop.—

MRS. S. You are too much in your workshop; why if you shook yourself up a little, you might get into the House!—

SMITH. (*jumping up*.) Into what?—into the House? — Bless the woman! — And a nice member I'd make!—Because I know a beaver-skin from an imitation, does that mean that I can rule a kingdom? I was born in hats, and nobody can beat me at hats! but what figure should I cut in Parliament? What do I know about laws, treaties, alliances, wars, ships, agriculture, constitutions and regulations, eh?

MRS. S. Oh! you would not be the first man who had——

SMITH. Unfortunately!—and more is the shame!—The country would be all the better off, if every fellow who has turned an honest penny at an honest trade, would only stick to it and not dabble in politics, the nation generally footing the bill of his blunders! Legislation is a profession like everything else; it requires knowledge and must be acquired when young, by dint of training. It can't be learned sixty, by half an hour's reading of the Constitution.

HORACE. You are not ambitious, Mr. Smith!

SMITH. Ambitious? Yes sir, *I am* ambitious, and I have always been ambitious! and that is why I have prospered!—My father was a journey-man hatter and because *he* was ambitious, he died leaving me a fine retail store and a good solid custom. I knew my trade thoroughly; with energy and work, I defied competition; I won medals at all the Exhibitions; I made improvements; I invented patent frames, patent linings and patent springs; The T. J. Smith hats became known all over the world! I increased the business by adding a wholesale department; where my father sold one hat, I sell a hundred; where he bought a dozen skins, I buy a thousand! I have cargoes of sealskins from Canada; freight trains of rabbit-skins from Switzerland; vessels laden with furs from Russia! I have contracts for army supplies from every country; and the name of Thomas Joshua Smith at the foot of a note will be honored without endorsement anywhere in the city, for it is known that my word is my bond!—That is ambition, sir, but in its proper place!—

HORACE. But, my dear Mr. Smith, at that rate the world would never move; we'd always be what our great grandfathers were before us.....

SMITH. (LORRINER *slips in*.) Not at all, sir!—As you see, I am a bigger man than my father, and here is Charley here! he did not take to hats, he had his mother's restlessness in him; he wanted to be something higher; "All right" I said; "you are young; my lad; you are in time to take in the right training;" I put him in the right groove; you know he has gone through all

the courses of study; he is to take his degree in a few weeks; I shall soon fit him rooms for practice and shall spare nothing to give him a good start; then his own brains must work his path for him; and if twenty years hence his brains land him in Parliament, he will prove a good, efficient, and experienced member; and my ambition will be much more satisfied by being the father of a prominent leader, than to be myself, like a fish out of water, the dunce of the House of Commons!

LOR. (*aside.*) Dunce of the House—geese of the Capitol.—*Anseres Capitolii!*—(MRS. SMITH and MARGARET force SMITH down on his chair, pet and fan him.)

CHAS. (*aside to HORACE.*) Mercy, if father only knew that I got plucked at the last examination and can't even present myself to run for the degree!—

HOR. (*aside to CHARLES.*) Pshaw!—pretend to run for it anyhow, get left and accuse the jury of partiality;—he'll believe you have studied hard and will pity rather than blame you. You have plenty of time to become a lawyer next year, there is no hurry about it.....

CHAS. (*aside.*) If I only get out of it *this* year, I'll work and catch up!—

SMITH. By the bye, my man, where were you yesterday? I did not set my eyes on you; you came home so late, and this morning, you were off without your breakfast; why so?—

MRS. S. Oh! they had a special debate and a night session. He told me so just now!—

SMITH. Is that so, boy? (CHAS. *nods timidly.*)

MRS. S. You would not doubt his word, would you?—

SMITH. Doubt his word? Heaven help me from ever doing that! (*slapping CHAS. on the shoulder.*) No, my boy, no, no, go and work, work hard that is the way to succeed. If the day is not enough, study at night. That is the way to reach the top of the ladder—you can take your rest *then!* That is how I understand ambition, Mr. Graham!—

LOR. Well said, sir! Work, success and glory! *labor, prosperitas, gloria!*—

SMITH. What are you doing here, you lazy lubber?

don't you know Col. Drummond's shako must be finished before one o'clock parade?—hurry up! or rather, here, I'll do it myself! Excuse me, Mr. Graham!—

HOR. Certainly—why, in fact, we ought to be going. Charles, we'll be late!

SMITH. (to CHAS.) Another debate?

HOR. Yes, or rather the sequel of yesterday's—come on, Charlie—

LORRINER. (*piling up hats.*) Billardus, billarda, billardum!—

SMITH. Go ahead, my boy! This evening we shall,.....

HOR. This evening we must attend a lecture on Roman law and bigamy—

LOR. (*aside.*) At Cremorne! Cremornus, cremorna, cre—

SMITH (to LORRINER.) What's that?

LORRINER. (*dropping a hat.*) Nothing!

HORACE. (to MRS. S.) Good bye, my dear Mrs Smith, good bye—(*apart*) do not forget Lord Lyndon—(*aloud.*) Miss Smith (*bowing.*) (*Exeunt HORACE and CHARLES.*)

MRS. S. I must speak now or never!—

SMITH. (to LORRINER giving a military^o hat.) Here! see that this goes in time! (*Exit LORRINER.*) Ah! now let me make myself comfortable! Madge, there's a good girl!—take my coat up stairs! I've got to look over these boxes before they are shipped.—Where's my apron?—Here it is! (*slips it on.*) Now I feel cozy!—Let me see; my order book and a pencil!—This is the first order of hats from Honolulu. 500 parade caps for the King's guards and fifteen silk beavers for His Majesty's household;—I want to see if the men have turned out first-class articles;—that is the way to secure foreign trade!—Let me see—Box No. 1—twenty-five caps—No. 2.—five beavers(*goes on humming and inspecting the boxes and order book.*)

MARG. (to MRS. S.) Mother, don't you think he is now in a good humor?—

MRS. S. I think so, we had better try!—It is necessary he should not be taken by surprise when Lady Lyndon comes.—

MARG. (to MRS. S.) And recollect Lord Lyndon told

me she would be very likely to come towards one.—She may be here pretty soon.

SMITH. What are you both whispering for? Want to go to some place of amusement to-night?—What is up?

CAPT. JOHNSON. (*from outside.*) He is in there?—All right, I'll find him!

SMITH. Who's voice is that?

Enter JOHNSON.

JOHNSON. Why there he is!—that is him!

SMITH. Why Johnson! my dear old friend! (*They embrace*)

JOHNSON. Why yes, your old schoolmate!—the old salt come back to London for a while!—taking coal at Gravesend, I thought I'd run up and see you all!—

MRS. S.—Why mercy, who would have thought!—why you left us fifteen years ago!—

JOHNSON. Eighteen, ma'am, eighteen!—I have knocked about everywhere since then;—but I am right glad to see you all in the same old place;—You both look splendid! Why I would have known you anywhere!—How's the children?

SMITH. Hey!—they have been growing—that's Maggie there!—you left her in long clothes or thereabout's, did you not?

JOHNSON. Why Maggie, I must kiss you! I have often heard of you tho' I had no idea you were such a big girl!—a regular woman!—and where is Charles?—he must have a beard now, eh?

MRS. SMITH. He has a slight moustache and I think is very proud of it—

SMITH. Of course you stay with us?—

MRS. S. I'll get your room ready!—come along, Maggie! (*aside.*) It is no use talking to him now.—(*Exit*)

MAR. I wish he had come some other day! (*Exit.*)

SMITH. Well Johnson, I am awfully glad to see you!

JOHNSON. (*looking round.*) This does seem like old times! I can just fancy us two boys playing marbles in this corner and your good old father working there at that counter.—Do you recollect the day we had concealed a dog in a box there.....

SMITH. (*laughing.*) And how we forgot to feed him.

JOHNSON. (*laughing*) And he chewed up all the skins.....

SMITH. (*laughing.*) Did not I catch it though that day!.....

JOHNSON. (*laughing.*) And how I cut and ran!—Those were jolly days, Tom! Well, and how is life with you now?

SMITH. Pretty comfortable—I've made my little pile

JOHNSON. I am glad to see you have stuck to the old ship, and not moved to some fandangled new place.—

SMITH. No indeed, though my wife has often been after me for that.—I have enlarged it—of course; but I live right here; nothing like the master's eye!—the first at work in the morning,—the last to lock up things at night!—

JOHNSON. That's the way to keep the old shell afloat!

SMITH. You see, I am in for solid improvement all the time—but I don't believe in this new fashion of putting all the worth of your concern on the outside of the house in gilding and style for fools to stare at, and one fine day you go down crash with only a few shillings in your pocket! No; T. J. Smith is at his old stand, like the Bank of England;—and what is good enough for the old Lady of Threadneedle street, is good enough for T. J. Smith! (*to LORRINER who has slipped in listening.*) What are you doing here? can't you attend to the counter?

JOHNSON. Is that Charlie?

SMITH. No! One of the hands—and a lazy bones into the bargain!

JOHNSON. I thought he could not be;—he has an open smile that I have met on the banks of the Mississippi.....among the alligators—but where is Charles?

SMITH. He is out now.....he'll soon be here; he is finishing his studies as a lawyer.—

JOHNSON. Lawyer? Why I thought you would have made a hatter of him.

SMITH. Well, he did not seem to care—and he likes the study of law;—he has followed up all the necessary degrees; he is always studying—he is now at some lec-

ture or debate ;—I found great hopes on the lad though he does not follow my line—He is a smart fellow !—

JOHNSON. Good ! let him be what he likes so long as he goes right ahead—Why, Maggie is old enough to be married eh ?

SMITH. I suppose so—

JOHNSON. How about our pet plan of marrying her to my nephew ?—James Turner is a nice fellow ; I have just seen him ; his business is good, and he is very clever ;—he has patented a “porous plaster” that is taking like wild fire and he is giving the last touches to a “hair renewer” which he thinks will make his fortune They’d make a nice pair if they care for each other.....

SMITH. They would indeed. I don’t know a lad I would give my girl to with a better heart.—He used to come very often and they seemed very friendly, like children who have known each other all their lives ; I have often hoped it would be a match ; —but of late he does not seem to come so often—

JOHNSON. I’ll see into that—Jim’s letters were full of hopes to that effect and he was very anxious I should come to England, as he wanted me to be there when he broached the subject.—I think he fears the old lady, eh ?—

SMITH. I don’t know why he should—She likes the boy, I’ve heard her say so many a time ; I’ll speak to her about it, but there is no fear on that score, if the youngsters only fall in with each other ; and you know, old fellow, when T. J. Smith’s daughter marries, there’s \$100,000 in the Bank of England for her portion ; and just as much for Charlie and that is outside of my business altogether ; just laid aside for them. So, you tell young Turner, it is not to every chap I’d give my money and my daughter, but he is welcome.

JOHNSON. Thank you, old boy, I will. I’ll run over to him again on my way to fetch my luggage at the station. Don’t forget to speak to the old lady, eh ! I’d like to leave the youngsters regularly engaged before I go.

SMITH. I shan’t forget. This evening we must have our old backgammon match ;—I bet you I can beat you yet ! (*Exit* JOHNSON.) I am glad the old boy has come

again! as he says it is like old times. Egad, I feel younger by twenty years! (*sings as he bustles round.*)

Enter MARGARET (at the top of the stairs.)

MARGARET. Mamma! come, he is all alone!

Enter Mrs. S.

MRS. S. (*to MARG.*) Here is a good opportunity.

MARGARET. (*to MRS. S.*) Had I better remain?

MRS. S. (*to MARGARET.*) As you like!—Yes, you may help to persuade him—

SMITH. Ah! you two are here again; Now what's up, eh!—I am in a good humor now, you are likely to get what you want out of me..... ..

MRS. S. Well I am glad one can speak to you at last!—

SMITH. You don't mean to say you were afraid of Johnson? Is it quite a great secret?—eh?

MRS. S. That's just what it is

SMITH. And you are greatly interested too, it seems, Miss, eh?—

MARGARET (*petting him.*) Yes, indeed papa! you darling good pappy!

SMITH. Just so! can't we be sweet when we want something, eh?—"darling good pappy" why of course I am; I am always thinking about you; why only just now I was talking about you with Johnson, and guess about what? about.... marrying you!—

MRS. S. (*sharply.*) To whom?

SMITH. How, to whom?—why, mother, you know very well.....it has been going on long enough I should say; with young Turner, of course. Why are you both struck dumb, eh? what's the matter with you both, anyhow?

MRS. S. It is easy to see: it means simply that she does not care a bit for that fellow.

SMITH. Nonsense! why, Madge.....

MRS. S. Well, I tell you; I know.

SMITH. Can't you let her speak for herself?—Speak out, Madge. Is that so? —Don't you care for Jim? it

had been understood you know.....now, speak out!—have you fallen out with him or what?

MARGARET—(*hesitatingly.*) No, we are good friends; but I do not think I'd like him for a husband.

MRS. S. And I know she doesn't! there! that is clear enough, is it not?—

SMITH. Well! I am struck all of a heap—why? what more do you expect?—here is a nice good-looking, well-behaved young man whom you have known all your life, steady, good-tempered, with a good solid business—

MRS. S. Why, that's just it! a nice business! to have your husband rolling pills or stirring-up hair oil all his life!

SMITH. (*flaring up.*) Mrs. Smith didn't your husband press hats all his life?—And let me tell you, I have known the day, when you would have looked mighty blue, if I had had no hats to press!

MRS. S. That's very different! I did not have the education my daughter has received, nor her money either! When a girl has been brought up as she has, in an elegant boarding-school, with the best young ladies in the land for play-mates; when she has been trained to shine in drawing-rooms one does not poke her behind a counter.

SMITH. She need not be behind a counter and a druggist is a man of education and has to go through a good deal of learning and they are well matched that way—and it is a good business where plenty of money can be made.

MRS. S. Thank goodness, she does not need that! we can afford to give her a fine fortune of her own! But then there are other ways of making money without being a shopkeeper.....I do not see why we should force our only daughter to marry against her will—

SMITH (*getting warm.*) Who on earth talks of forcing her? If she does not want him—she need not have him!—more fool she!—the idea of forcing her to marry somebody!—who talks of forcing?—do I look like a father likely to force her to do anything against her will, eh?

MARG. (*throwing her arms round his neck.*) My own dear good father!

SMITH. (*aside.*) If James Turner saw this would'n't he

like it! And Johnson who is gone to tell him to keep up a good heart and not be bashful! | (*aloud*) Why on earth did you not tell me so before?—

MRS. S. She was afraid—

SMITH. (*softening.*) Afraid? afraid of what?—of worrying me? why, you silly little girl, (*taking MARG on his knee and sitting down*) Why should you be afraid?—I only want to secure your happiness—and of course, if you do not think you can be happy with him, why that's all right; all I cared for was that I have seen him grow up and know all about him; and I'll say it again, I don't know a man I would trust the happiness of my child with, sooner than him:—but then, that is all right;—I am in no hurry to see you married;—I am not running after sons-in laws, you are quite young enough and can afford to wait; and indeed, Maggie, if it was't for the future, for the fear of leaving you alone, when the old folks are gone, if it was for myself alone, I'd much rather you'd never marry;—You are quite rich enough to be a happy old maid.—

MRS. S.—The idea!—

SMITH. Well, marriage for her, means parting for us—and I don't know that I shall ever be ready to part with my little girl;—but of course, some day, it will have to be.....for your sake.....

MARG. But papa, I don't want to leave you and mamma!—even if I marry, I can see you every day; we can live close by, and dine together and.....

SMITH.. That's all very well; but that depends if it would suit your husband.....

MARG. Of course it will suit him; I know it will!—he said so.....(*stops in confusion.*)

SMITH. (*rising.*) Who said so? who's *he*?.....

MARG. (*blushing in a whisper.*) Henry.....

SMITH. And who's Henry?

MRS. S. Well, Lord Lyndon.....there!—now you know all!—

SMITH. What? Lord Lyndon?—that young man that buys so many hats?.....

MRS. S. The same;—he loves Maggie, and he has proposed to her and his mother is actually coming to—

day to make a formal visit to us and get acquainted, so that everything may appear fair and square.

SMITH. Why, he is an earl? Why, women you are both crazy—ain't you?

MRS. S.—No indeed, we are not!—but it is certainly an unexpected piece of good luck—

SMITH. That may all be, but I can't say I like the idea.....

MRS. S. And why not?—He is all we could wish—he is good looking, steady, pleasant, has a fine fortune, good expectations.....

SMITH. That is all very well, but I wish he were poorer and in our set.....

MRS. S. What non-sense? Is it his fault if his family is as old as the hills? if he is an earl?—if his mother is Countess Lyndon and if his uncle is an Admiral?—he is not a bit stuck up for all that! why he himself is in business; young as he is, is he not sub-director of the East Indian Citizen's Bank?—is he not a principal shareholder in the Western midland Railroad?—Why instead of fooling his time with cards, race-horses and.....you know what I mean Mr. Smith, there he is, at his age, quite a prominent man on the Stock Exchange, over head and ears in business—

SMITH. Business—pshaw! that may be nothing else but another form of gambling,—some gamble with a couple of dice or a pack of cards; others with horses and dogs and others with shares and stock;—I believe in good honest trade and not much in speculation—

MRS. S. Mr. Smith you know very well that what you say can't apply to him!—he does not speculate with other people's money;—he has his own solid fortune to invest and attend to; and as for his being an earl and of a condition above us, why let me tell you, Thomas Joshua Smith, that when one is as rich as we, are we belong to all conditions—

SMITH. That's all very well—but will you ever feel comfortable with this fine gentleman for a son-in-law?—with a lot of friends we don't know?—with tastes and habits that will be new to us?—and all of them not understand our manners and our customs—

MRS. S. Gracious! the way you talk! one would think we were Esquimaux!—

SMITH. Well, that is about how they will look upon us!—and the idea that for the sake of a fine gentleman, a good honest lad should be sacrificed, who loves you, Maggie who could make you happy.....

MRS. S. How can one be happy with a man one does not love?

SMITH. Love, love!—pshaw!—stuff and nonsense! she liked him well enough before this other fellow came round!—Love, pshaw!—what does she know about love? love will grow if you give it a chance!—

MRS. S. Ah! you would not have said that twenty-five years ago, Mr. Smith! that's the trouble with trade, it stops every feeling!—why if I had said to you, when you courted me, that—

SMITH. Oh if you begin to work upon my feelings, you know very well, I shall make a fool of myself.

MRS. S. Why has our married life been a happy one?

SMITH. Because we were of the same path in life; my father sold hats and yours, fruits and candy—

MRS. S. Not at all Mr. Smith, not at all!—It is because we loved each other!.....and I know, Tom, if they had forced me to marry somebody else and told me:—"never mind, you'll learn to love him later" I.....I..... should have died,.....Tom!—I know I would! (*cries on his shoulder.*)

SMITH. Come, come Mary Ann!—of course I meanwhen I say.....I don't mean.....why let her marry whomever she pleases, so long as the man is not—

MRS. S. So long as the man is not the man she loves!—Mr. Smith, I ought to have expected this!—You always were a tyrant! (*sits down sobbing.*)

MARG. Oh, papa!.....(*sits down crying.*)

SMITH. (*going from one to the other.*) That's it! put on the water-works!.....I am a tyrant!—.....Why, Madge,—you know very well, I am no tyrant!—I only want your happiness;—you know that I care for you more than I can tell;—I want to see you! the wife of a good honest lad, who will be proud of your father and glad to see your mother;—who will have no stuck-up re-

lations; whose house will be mine, as mine will be his;—who will slap me on the shoulder and say when he meets me “Hallo, old dad, come in and take pot luck!”—eh that’s what you want too, Mary Ann?—And—and—
(*violently*) Oh! if you all keep cryingwhy let her have her fine gentleman,—it she will have him! and——so long as you still love your old father.....

MARGARET. (*springing up and hugging him.*) Oh! my dear good father!—

MRS. S. (*hugging him.*) Now I know you again, Tom!—

SMITH. Am I a tyrant Mrs. Smith?—Did not I tell you, you’d make me make a fool of myself!.....

Enter JOHNSON.

JOHNSON. I am back! Don’t mind me! I’ve got to be in the secret, you know, sooner or later

SMITH. (*aside, embarrassed*) What on earth am I to tell Johnson?

JOHNSON. (*to SMITH.*) I have seen Jimmy—he’s coming round as soon as he can get rid of some customers;—and I came back to tell you in a hurry for I do not want to miss my dinner as I am awfully hungry. (*to MARG.*) Well Maggie my girl, how do you like the plan?—

MARGARET. (*turning away from him.*) What plan do you mean? (*Exit up stairs*)

JOHNSON. Oh, Miss innocence!—as if you did not know?—But I dare say, Mrs. S. knows all about it—eh? What do you say about it, Mrs. S.?

MRS. S. (*turning away.*) I have not the slightest idea of what you mean!

JOHNSON. How so?

MRS. S. (*to SMITH as she ascends the staircase with MARGARET.*) Don’t forget our agreement, Mr Smith!

JOHNSON. (*following them to the foot of the staircase.*) But surely you know what I mean?

MRS. S. Please excuse me Mr. Johnson, I am in a hurry! (*Exit up stairs*)

JOHNSON (*turning toward SMITH who is pretending to look round for something, in order to conceal his uneasiness*) Smith!

SMITH. (*trying to evade questions.*) I am looking for my iron.....I had put it here.....and.....I have lost the bill.....those hands are so careless! (*calling.*) Lorriner, where is the bill?

JOHNSON. (*taking him by the arm.*) Leave all this alone and explain to me—have you spoken to your wife?—

SMITH. Yes—

JOHNSON. Well what does she say?

SMITH. Well—ugh.....ugh.....she.....ugh—

JOHNSON. Does not she like the plan?

SMITH. Well, no.—To tell you the truth she does not like it at all,—at all;—

JOHNSON. And Maggie?—what does she think of it?

SMITH. Well Maggie,.....she does not think she would like it either.....like her mother—

JOHNSON. Why, what has changed their feelings toward James?

SMITH. Well.....ugh.....ugh.....a father must sacrifice his wishes to those of his children.....and my choice.....of course,—and then you see her education—she was five years in the most stylish boarding school—and has acquired different tastes from mine—and of course.....she has.....(*dashing in*) in fact a young lord stands a better chance than poor James!—

JOHNSON. What do you mean?

SMITH. I mean that it seems he has proposed to Maggie—she favors him—his family is very old.....very old,

JOHNSON. (*snappishly.*) So old, I suppose, that nobody can tell where they came from.....

SMITH. I can't object to him; he has an independent fortune of his own and a title besides, which of course is no disparagement—

JOHNSON. And what is his name?

SMITH. Lyndon.....Lord Lyndon.

JOHNSON. There is an Admiral of that name?

SMITH. Lord Lyndon is his nephew.—

JOHNSON. (*whistling.*) I say—Smith!—that's in the real upper ten,—my boy!.....well, I suppose I must congratulate you, though it kind of.....well.....I am ashamed to say, but it.....it—knocks me on the head!—

SMITH. (*sadly*) Johnson—it nearly breaks my heart!

I am the one to suffer most from it,—It seems to me that Maggie married in this way, will be more separated from me than if she were in the Sandwich Islands but yet..... what can I do?—he is all we can wish in a son-in-law, and they love each other,—Maggie has set her heart on it;—the old woman is raving about it; and she calls me tyrant because I don't rush in ecstasies!—

JOHNSON. (*sighing.*) Well, I suppose there is no help for it; the best to be done is to think the least of it, look at the brightside and steer clear of clouds;—it has rather taken my breath away and I even nearly forgot I was hungry!—

SMITH. That's so!—when is dinner coming?—(*speaking through the speaking tube*) Hurry up dinner!

Enter LORRINER. (rushing in.)

LOR. Mr. Smith, there is a grand private carriage at the door and a lady is stepping out!!—

SMITH. (*looking through the glass partition.*) Lord Lyndon!—that must be his mother! (*calling.*) Mary Ann! Maggie! Mary! Here I am in my apron! (*rushing round.*) Where is my coat?—my coat? Lorriner,—don't let them enter through the store!—my coat!—Too late!—

JOHNSON. They are sailing in this way;—fly up stairs and get another coat!—(*Exit SMITH upstairs; JOHNSON retires in a corner.*)

Enter LORD LYNDON, LADY LYNDON,

LADY L. Well, Henry I certainly never expected to come to such a place as this to search for a daughter-in-law!—when you could have had your choice of all the best matches in town! I am afraid I am a foolish mother to humor your fancy so far; I hope this weakness of mine will be forgiven me! I feel as if I was marching to your execution!—(*looking through her eyeglasses.*) but, is this what is called a back store? Are there any skins here? It smells queer, does it not!—You don't mean to say they live here?—

LYNDON. In the house above, mother—they have a nice comfortable home there—I ought not to have stopped

at the store; I ought to have told James to ring at the house door; but he is so accustomed to come this way.....

LADY L. Ah! if I did not know that this girl is backed by an ample fortune and a good, substantial inheritance from her parents in the future—I should never have consented!—But your threat of going to India, and leaving a fine position here for that wretched climate—if I refused..... my son, I tell you truly you are putting my affections to a strong test this morning! I do it under protest:—of course if it *has* to be done, it may be done pleasantly, and avoid scandal—but I assure you, Henry, your wife will have to be very charming indeed to make me like her!

LYNDON. Oh! mother you'll learn to love her as I do!—

Enter SMITH, (coming down stairs buttoning his coat.)

SMITH. Here I am! Sir, Madam, I beg pardon.....

LYNDON. Mr. Smith—allow me to introduce my mother to you—

SMITH. (*awkwardly.*) Why certainly!—in fact it is I who have the honor of introducing myself!—

JOHNSON. (*aside seated behind the counter.*) Those two will never sail together!

LADY L. Perhaps we interfere at this time of the day, with your occupation—

SMITH. (*embarrassed.*) Not at all, not at all, on the contrary! It is I who interfere.....won't you sit down?—won't you take something? eh! a glass of wine?—perhaps a cool glass of beer?—what you like?

LADY L. (*smiling.*) Nothing thank you! we have just left the breakfast table—I am come.....you are very probably informed of my son's intentions.....—I am come to make the acquaintance of your charming daughter.....

SMITH. (*shuffling uncomfortably.*) Certainly.....and my charming wife too.....(*aside.*) Why don't they come down! (*aloud.*) I beg your pardon—but your ladyship knows..... the womenfolks are never ready!..... always late!always late!

JOHNSON. (*aside.*) I don't see much prospect of a dinner for me—

SMITH. Oh! you are not comfortable on that chair!—wouldn't you prefer an armchair.....

LADY L. No—I am quite comfortable, thank you!

SMITH. But you would be better on an armchair—(*calling*) Lorriner!—Go up stairs and fetch an armchair!—(*to* LYNDON.) My dear sir—just lay down your hat; let me take it! (*takes the hat and mechanically brushes it with his sleeve.*)

Enter MARGARET.

MARG. Lord Lyndon!

Enter MRS. SMITH (*curtsying deeply.*)

MRS. S. And his mother, I suppose?

LYNDON. Yes, my dear Mrs. Smith—my mother who has kindly acquiesced to my wish and is anxious to make your acquaintance.

MRS. S. Why my lady, this is quite an honor. This is my daughter!

LADY L. (*to* MARGARET.) Let me kiss you my dear girl—I have heard a great deal about you, but I must say, I do not think the description was at all flattered.

SMITH. (*to* JOHNSON.) She's very nice!

JOHNSON. Very nice! (*aside*) I wish I could say as much of the dinner!—

Enter LORRINER *carrying a large leather armchair.*

LOR. Room! here's the armchair!.....

MRS. S. Goodness gracious! Why did you fetch that horrible old thing?—

LORRINER. (*hugging the chair.*) Why, its the most comfortable! Master always takes his after-dinner nap on it!

MRS. S. Carry it away!—bring me the yellow satin one, by the fire place.

LADY L. Please don't.....Mrs. Smith!

MRS. S. And the blue velvet foot stool!

LYNDON. I beg you to give yourself no trouble.....

MRS. S. Oh! it's no trouble—he's there for that!—

JOHNSON. (*aside*) As I suppose there's no chance of a dinner now, for several hours I'll step into a restaurant; then I'll go back to my poor nephew and tell him all his hopes are gone adrift! (*Exit unperceived.*)

MRS. S. (*to LADY L.*) I am really ashamed to receive you in this way!

LADY L. Please don't mention it.

SMITH. Wouldn't you prefer going up stairs in the parlor?

MRS. S. Ah! Mr. Smith, how can you!—this horrible staircase!—of course, if the Countess had come in by the hall-door—but now she's here.....unless we go round by the street.....

SMITH. That's so!—this winding staircase is a nuisance but you see, my lady, in business we have got to put up with many things.

LADY L. Of course; you sacrifice the present to the future—It is very natural and wise.

SMITH. (*turning to where JOHNSON was.*) She's very nice, very nice.—Where is he gone to? —

LADY L. But now all this will soon end.—You'll soon be able to enjoy the results of your sacrifices—when you quit your business—

SMITH. (*taken aback.*) Ma'am?—I beg your pardon.....I did not quite hear.....

LADY L. I said—that when you give up your business, as you soon shall.....

SMITH. Quit the business!—Oh no, my lady, I am too fond of it.—I intend to die in business——

LADY L. Well, but.....if your daughter is married.....

SMITH. Well, that won't prevent my going on with the concern.—I am still hale and hearty——

LADY L. (*seriously*) I must have misunderstood my son; (*to LYNDON.*) did you not tell me, Henry, that it was agreed that Mr Smith should.....

LYNDON. These ladies had certainly led me to hope.....

SMITH. What?—that I should give up my business?—

MRS. S. Why, of course, dear.—It is a natural consequence.

SMITH. (*getting excited.*) What is a natural conse-

quence?—it is not natural!—there is no consequence!—did you ever, Johnson?—(*turning*) where the devil is he?—

MRS. S. My dear!—before the Countess!

SMITH. My lady, will excuse me, but you must understand—what on earth am I to do with myself without my business—

LADY L. Oh! we'll provide you with occupation, Mr Smith!—I think we could secure you a borough with our influence—

SMITH. (*stiffly*.) I beg your pardon;—but I could not represent it properly.—I am not cut for parliament — If I had thought myself good for the House, I could have got myself in, long ago, without your influence.—I did not know you despised my trade so much, Lord Lyndon; I never thought it could put anyone to the blush before—

LADY L. (*soothingly*.) Oh! Mr. Smith it is not for myself or my son that I am speaking!—These young people love each other and we are both agreed to let them be happy; of course, you and I, seek nothing but their happiness, eh? Well, you see, my son is also in business; he is sub-director of a bank;—he is on a Rail Road board of management;—all this brings him in contact with people whom he must please;—an uncle of his, is in official life;—his influence depends from very high people;—their feelings, their *prejudices*, if you like, must be considered;—if my son were to break through certain conventional rules, most absurd I admit, which I do not approve of, but still which it is policy to respect,.....you understand,—there are considerations in business which must be taken notice of;.....you are such a business man yourself that you must well understand what I mean;—I know you do;—a man of your intelligence,—of course, comprehends.

SMITH. (*embarrassed*.) well, of course.....I understand.....that is,—I don't see.....

MARG. Oh, dear papa! do that for me!We shall all love you so!—we'll all take such good care of you! why should you go on working so hard..... it is time you should rest and enjoy yourself. I shall be so glad when you'll be able to come and see me all day long with mother!—Is it not so Henry?

LYNDON. Why certainly—Our home will be yours—we don't intend to leave you any time to devote to your business.

MRS. S. You could not attend properly to it.—Now Thomas be reasonable!

MARG. Do—dear papa, do give it up for my sake!

S. If you all set up against me.....well I suppose.....I must.....

MARG. MRS. S. (*kissing him*) Dear papa!—Dear husband!

SMITH. (*half angry.*) That's all right; you wanted me to do it;—it is a plot;—you've got it, now that will do.

LYNDON. Mr Smith I shall never forget the sacrifice you have made for me this morning—

LADY L. Mr Smith your conduct is above any possible praise—It is what we parents have to do all our lives: Sacrifice our tastes to our children's future..... they are all in all to us;—but now all this is settled;—we must have nothing else in view but to hasten their happiness.—Come and spend the afternoon with me my dear Mrs. Smith; and of course my dear daughter Margaret must come too, or Henry will be inconsolable; and Mr Smith could come in for dinner and pass the evening.—We dine at seven.—I want to drive round to my attorney's to give him the necessary directions about our family papers and settlements. Henry can leave me there and drive back to fetch you—that will give you time to get ready—No ceremony my dear Mrs. Smith. Just a bonnet and shawl—we'll be all by ourselves—

MRS. S. Delighted, your ladyship; we shall be delighted—

LADY L. Give me another kiss, Margaret, before I go—and I think now we could allow Henry to do the same; well, we'll see each other in a little while, so we won't say good bye! (LYNDON gives his arm to his mother. *Exeunt through the front store.*)

SMITH. Not through the store!—here's the home door this way!.....

MRS. S. Come on, Maggie! we must dress up in a hurry.—Put on your nice blue dress and your white hat. (*Exeunt upstairs.*)

SMITH. I have given my word !.....I wish I had'nt—and Johnson sneaking away just as he might have been of some use to me !—Who would have guessed that I should ever consent to this !—Give up my business !—why I have lived here since I was a child and I certainly thought I'd die here.....

Enter JOHNSON.

JOHNSON. Here I am !

SMITH. (*gruffly.*) It is high time !—

JOHNSON. Well, I was hungry ;—and I knew it would take time to go through all the arrangements and emotions ;—but I'll tell you some other piece of news — While I was eating my dinner all by my self, I thought I'd had enough of traveling. You see, I did not feel that way, when I landed in foreign ports ;—but now, that I have struck London again and seen you all—I said to myself what's the use of passing the rest of my life far from everybody that cares for old Jack ?—so, do you know ? I made up my mind I'd resign on halfpay !—I'll live with James round the corner poor ; lad, that kind of softened the blow for him too—for, of course, I went to tell him it was no use his thinking of Maggie any more ; so you see, if you part with Maggie, you'll have me ; every evening I'll come round for my old game of backgammon—eh, old boy ; how's that ?

I ORRINER. (*rushing in.*) Ah ! Mr. Smith, is that so ? are you going to sell the concern ?

JOHNSON. Hey ? what ? what does he say ?—sell the concern ? you ?.....

SMITH. (*reluctantly*) Well yes.....I have got to..... if not..... no marriage—

JOHNSON. And you have given in again ?

SMITH. Well I had to ;—they all were after me—

JOHNSON. Of course ;—you ought to have known that these fine folks would blush to have a hat in their coat-of arms—

SMITH. (*trying to repeat the words of the Countess*) No it is not that—but.....consideration which must influence us ;.....and prejudices which we must sacrifice to our affections.....and our love for our children..... and if you had heard how they promisedwhat they

said.....and though I said.....they said.....and—by the bye.....why were you not there to help me out?

JOHNSON. I had gone to take dinner—

SMITH. But you staid so long!

JOHNSON. I'll tell you; I went to the coffee-house round the corner and in the next room some youngsters were playing billiards;—they came in and asked me to be umpire—of course I had to see the game through..... ..

Enter CHARLES.

CHARLES. Why father, I have just heard that it is all settled about Maggie.

JOHNSON. (*aside*) Why that is one of my young billiard-players!

CHAS. I hear you have also decided to give up.....

SMITH. Yes.....by the by, where have you been?—

CHAS. I have just come back from the debate.

JOHNSON. (*aside*) Ah—my poor friend Smith, I fear you are not through your troubles yet!—(CHARLES perceives JOHNSON, recognizes him and makes him sign to keep his secret from his father—JOHNSON threatens him with his stick.)

SMITH. By the by!—Johnson, this is Charlie; my boy, this is my old chum, Jack Johnson, you hear me speak of so often.....how do you like the lad, Johnson?

JOHNSON. (*shaking CHARLIE's hand and looking at him steadily*) He's what one calls a smart lad, I suppose.....

Enter LYNDON.

LYNDON. My dear father in-law, are the ladies ready?

SMITH. I'll see. (*goes to the staircase.*)

CHARLIE. (*to JOHNSON.*) Please, sir, don't tell my father.....

JOHNSON. I shan't this time. But if I catch you fibbing, again—you young rascal.....

Enter MRS. SMITH. and MARGARET.

MRS. S. and MARG. (*coming down the staircase* Here we are! here we are!

LYNDON. The carriage is at the door. (*offering his arm to Mrs. S.*)—You'll follow soon, won't you, father?

SMITH. I will, I will! (*CHARLES offers his arm to his sister.*) I'll be round for dinner—seven o'clock, you said—

JOHNSON. (*aside.*) Well, I am glad I did not wait for dinner here!.....

ACT II

A richly furnished drawing room—Lord Lyndon's mansion in London—side doors and doors in the middle—sofa to the left. HORACE GRAHAM in evening dress, giving directions to servants in livery. RYAN.

HOR. As you saw it the other night at the German Embassy—flowers on each step of the staircase; the carpet must be placed in the centre of the hall—as the head-waiter here?

RYAN. Yes sir—here he is.

HOR. Have you got the bill of fare? WAITER (*hands it on a silver plate.*) Well.....good! (*reading.*) Oh! but the wines! not select enough!—sherry and champagne! pshaw! a regular tradesman's dinner! we must have Chateau—Lafitte, Tokay and Johannisberg!—we have foreign financial magnates, and we must show our best to-night—impress that on the chief cook, will you? and also tell him to have more forced fruit..... he has only put here what is in season!—never mind the expense; tell him to ransack the hot-house, and not to think of the cost; he does not pay the bill.

RYAN. (*aside.*) No more does he!

HOR. That's all! (*Exeunt servants.*) Splendidly kept house this! (*lolling back on the sofa.*) especially since I have taken it in hand!—Poor Lyndon did not understand much about keeping house—I had to put him up to some show of style; he is the same in his business; timid, afraid of taking any risks—I have to prove to him, in white and black, that a man of his name and rank can't make a show in this world without at least double his fortune. I must go on telling him that money makes money and that he must take some risks. I have made myself invaluable to him both in business and home matters, and

egad, I have a snug berth here! if the lady of the house were not so confoundedly shy and reserved! Ha, well, I may perhaps work my way through with her too; all I need is an opportunity.....but it is awfully hard work sometimes to persuade a man he is a genius; deuced hardWhy, hallo, Lyndon, where have you been?

Enter LORD LYNDON.

LYNDON. Just made a few business calls—

HOR. I can't see how you can stand it! Always so bu-y and energetic!—have you come from the bank?

LYNDON. Yes. They are favorable to my organizing this company and I think the House of Commons will vote favorably on the bill—As soon as that is done, the thing seems sure and safe.

HOR. Splendid affair! Why you'll be a millionaire in no time with it!—what a head you have for business to be sure!—it is a grand idea!

LYNDON. The preliminaries are all very well, very safe; but of course I must get this german millionaire baron to look favorably on the plan; if I can only induce him to throw some capital in it.....I found great hopes on this dinner-party to night. If my mother can only induce him to accept my invitation, and if every thing impresses him favorably here, then.....The Lord Chancellor of the Exchequer is coming—I have *his* acceptance; my german baron will find solid government influence on a social footing with me—do you see the moral effect on him, hey? If those two men meet in my house and the surroundings are impressive—the thing succeeds. I hope preparations for to-night are all of the best—if you think of anything that can improve the appearance in any way, have it without consulting me—I am too much occupied with the more serious features of the affair and may have overlooked many a little detail—but to-night nothing must be left undone!—Where's Lady Lyndon?—

HOR. I have not seen her; but I think she is coming now.....

Enter MARGARET.

LYNDON. Why, Margaret, I expected to see you dressed for dinner by this time!

MARG. I am dressed, Henry.

LYNDON. How so?

HOR. Lady Lyndon is always charming! beauty unadorned.....

LYNDON. My dear Margaret, very probably you do not understand the importance I attach to this dinner-party; I wish to impress the high financial magnates I expect to-night with the ampleness of my means and the solidity of my resources; great success depends on the right impression being given to-night—I wish you to look your best, and to wear your most elegant dress.—By the bye!—I intended to have selected a new set of diamonds for you for the occasion!—the Lyndon diamonds are old fashioned in the setting—and besides my mother will wear them. I want you to be dazzling to-night—Horace, will you run down to Tarr & Waterman's, and select a complete set for me?—the most brilliant you can get—

HOR. I'll do my best—though I may not find anything worthy enough of Lady Lyndon's beauty. (*Exit.*)

LYNDON. Now my dear Margaret, your brilliant appearance is secured—I want you to sparkle with your merriest wit; you do not know how much depends on our success to-night!—if we can win this German financier for this Company I am organizing, its success is assured—my mother is nearly sure of his coming—you'll have to take the Lord Chancellor in to dinner; do your best; I want my guests to see that I made a happy choice for society, when I married you—have you seen the drawing-room?

MARG. Not yet.

LYNDON. Why, what have you been doing all day?

MARG. (*sadly.*) I have been writing letters; it is so long since I had news!

LYNDON. News of what?

MARG. Of father and mother!

LYNDON. Oh, yes.

MARG. It is six months now since they went to Wales; they have bought property there and I fear they are so engaged with it that they nearly forget me—

LYNDON. You know, dear, no news is good news. They enjoy themselves in their way and you must do the same here—I do not want you to look sad, dearest, to-

night. I wish you to be just as merry and pretty as you can be for my sake—My dear little love, you must go and dress; there is no time for trifling. I must go out again and on my return I expect to find Margaret, Countess Lyndon under arms—*(takes her to her room and kisses her.)* Ryan! tell the coachman to wait for me at my broker's—

Enter RYAN. (hat in hand)

RYAN. Yes my lord—there is a man wants to see you.....

LYNDON. Say I am out!—I have no time. *(Exit.)*

SERVANT.—*(putting on his hat)* Just as I expected—these fellows think that we rich folks have nothing to do but to listen to them!

Enter SMITH.

SMITH. *(coming in.)* I'll walk in any how—never mind announcing me—

RYAN. My lord is gone out, sir, so you had better do so too, I suppose.

SMITH. *(beckons to him.)* Look here, friend, take that off!—there! *(takes his hat off)* that is better—now you can speak!

RYAN. Sir!—

SMITH. *(in a severe tone.)* I am civil to servants, and expect servants to be civil to me! *(sitting)* if Lord Lyndon is out, Lady Lyndon must be in!

RYAN. My Lady is dressing and has no time to see you; if you won't go quietly I'll have to.....

Enter MARGARET.

MARG. That voice! O my dear father!

RYAN *(aside.)* Her father!—

SMITH. *(embracing her.)* My darling! my little Maggie! Go out, I say! *(to RYAN who stares. Exit RYAN)*

MARG. Have you any complaints to make against him?

SMITH. None; I am only too glad to see you at last;—Why how pretty you look! you are beautiful, darling;—my beautiful girl! *(kissing her.)*

MARG. Tell me about mother!—

SMITH. She's in town! but the train gave her a headache—so she went home to lay down awhile and I came straight here. We have only just arrived, by the 2 10 train. She'll be here in a little while, in time for dinner; how's your brother?

MARG. Charles is well—I do not see him often—but I hear from him daily from Horace Graham.

SMITH. I suppose he is kept busy with study and attending the courts—Did you see what nice business rooms I set up for him before I left?—No?—Well! you must go and see them; everything in style; parlor in dark green velvet with bronze ornaments and black marble; every thing serious but comfortable; nice Axminster carpet, periodicals, newspapers, every thing to induce clients to wait. Then in his private study, book cases all round the wall; my! you ought to have seen the bookseller's bill! more than the upholsterer's!—stands with pigeon holes, compartments, drawers!—busts of celebrated lawyers, desks of all shapes—student's lamps, every thing in short. Then his bedroom!—as cozy as can be and a nice dining-room, that may also do for a second parlor in case he does not want two clients to meet—I think they are the nicest lawyer's rooms in the city—of course, it will take him time, to get some cases—but Maggie, the day I shall see him, in wig and gown pleading a case, will be the happiest day of my life!

MARG. Dear good father!

SMITH. Your husband seems to be doing well eh! every thing is got up in style, here! and a regiment of servants in the hall; and—law!—look at your dress!—won't mother like to see you, though! Won't she turn you round and round! You look a little pale and sad? Anything worrying you?

MARG. No!—only I did not hear from you—

SMITH. Well, we did not write because we were coming. If that is all that worries you, it is all over now, for we are come to settle down in London for good. When you were on your wedding tour, you know I sold my concern and bought a nice villa in Kensington; that is where your mother is now; we'll stay there till summer, though I may run over to Wales to see after the

farms there—you see, darling, I must keep busy, now that I have let go the hats. I have bought your mother a beautiful place near Swansea—you'll have to come down and see it; there are five farms connected with it and they will keep me going and thinking; there's a fine track of forest and a little river, I want to build something there—don't know what yet—have to find out. Now dear girl, I am so glad to see you!—I have not set my eyes on you since your wedding day—you went off to the Continent and before you returned we were off ourselves on a tour of old England!—well, well, we shall see enough of each other now!—we have both done gadding about!—we are going to keep our promise—we are coming to stay a few days with you till mother gets things in running order in the new house—

MARG. Oh I am so glad!—(*Rings enter RYAN.*) Ryan, see that the large bedroom facing mine is put in readiness for this evening!—(*Exit SERVANT bowing*)

SMITH. Maggie, I can't get it into my head you are Lady Lyndon—you are my own little Maggie yet!—law! shan't we have lots to say! Oh, by the bye, do you know what I have heard?—the youngster that bought my concern is dragging it down terribly!—does not understand the business; the work is not turned out carefully, everything is botched!—I hate to see the dear old thing going to rack and ruin! (*sighing*) however, I'll console my self with you both!—who's that? Is that Henry?—Don't say anything, I want so surprise him—

Enter LYNDON.

LYNDON. (*speaking outside.*) Everything seems going right—they all take interest in it—

SMITH. (*hugging him.*) Good, day Henry! I'm so glad to see you!

LYNDON. (*disengaging himself.*) Who's that?

SMITH. Why, that's me! ha ha ha!

LYNDON. Oh! Mr. Smith! excuse me, the surprise

SMITH. Yes ain't it a surprise?

LYNDON. Why yes.....quite a.....surprise.....why, Mr. Smith!.....this is unexpected!—

SMITH. Now—why don't you call me father, hey?—you're my son you know!—you did not expect me hey! ha ha!

LYNDON. Well, no.....can I do anything for you?

SMITH. No—thank you, much obliged—I only came round to see my girl. I said to myself—"I'll come down plump on the whole lot of 'em—and then I shall see if they make my girl happy!"

LYNDON. Well?

SMITH. Well, she has just told me she's as happy as she can be.

LYNDON. (*shaking MARGARET's hand.*) My dear Margaret—I am very glad to hear it—

SMITH (*aside.*) Well, did you ever?—shakes her hand?—why I would have kissed my old lady and given her such a hug!—but I suppose that is the way in the upper ten—(*aloud*) well, my dear boy, you see I have taken you at your word. On your wedding day, you said to me—"Come and stay with us some time father, when we return; you must consider our home yours!"—so here I am!

LYNDON. (*politely*) Ah! very glad to hear it.

MARG. Yes!—and I have had the room next to mine prepared for them!

LYNDON. (*taken aback.*) Ah! you have already..... had the room prepared—oh, I see.....certainly, certainly.

SMITH. (*rubbing his hands.*) Yes, yes, every thing is settled, my boy! we have arranged matters splendidly without you!

Enter AUGUSTUS CLAVERLAND and HORACE GRAHAM.

HOR. My dear Lyndon, allow me to introduce to you the Honorable Augustus Claverland, one of our most fashionable young men!

LYNDON. I am very happy to make your acquaintance.

AUGUST. I am indebted to my dear friend Graham for the pleasure.....

Enter RYAN followed by two gentlemen in full evening dress.

RYAN. (*announcing*) Mr. Compton—Mr. Blanchard (*salutations.*)

SMITH. (*to HORACE.*) Why, if that is not our young friend Graham! why how are you, my boy?

HOR. (*aside.*) Mercy! (*aloud*) Why if that is not..... Mr. Smith!

SMITH. (*heartily.*) I am just out of the train—and of course, rushed straight here!—home! ha ha ha! you know the song, (*sings*) there is no place like home!

HORACE. (*interrupting him.*) Of course—of course—Why Mr. Smith I am so glad to see you!.....just one moment (*to LYNDON.*) This a stunner, Lyndon! what on earth are you going to do with him?

LYNDON (*despondently.*) Heaven only knows—I don't!—I'm at my wit's end!

SMITH (*turning HORACE round.*) And how is your other friend—my boy Charles—eh?

HOR. Oh, very well indeed!—hard at work..... grasping the law..... and how is dear Mrs. Smith?

SMITH. As usual.....splendid!—she's coming in a few minutes.

HORACE. (*aside.*) The deuce she is!

AUGUSTUS (*to HORACE*) Whom have you got hold of?

HORACE. (*to AUGUSTUS.*) A crank, my dear boy..... Do you want to see something rich?—here give me your hat!.....(*takes AUG's hat*)

AUGUSTUS. (*to HORACE*) Does he perform legerdemain tricks?

HOR. You'll see!.....(*turning to SMITH who takes hold of the hat mechanically and brushes it with his sleeve.*) Why, have you not seen Charlie yet?

SMITH. No—I tell you we have only just come from the station; we have been six months in South Wales and all over the country!.....but, tell me—he must be very learned now, is he not?

HORACE. (*taking the hat and returning it to AUGUSTUS and taking MR. COMPTON's he gives it to SMITH who brushes it mechanically.*) Learned?—why I should say so! why, he is like a well of learning!—you cannot see the end of his knowledge!

SMITH. Well, I am glad to hear it!—real glad! I have spared nothing to make the lad succeed. He has had all the opportunities and money he wanted—You know I fitted him up an elegant lawyer's office, even before he needed one—before he took his degrees!.....by the by—you can tell me! how many final examinations are there?—I thought there was only one.....

HOR. Oh dear no! several.....five.....six, sometimes ten!—that depends on the caprice of the faculty!—some years there are more—some years less—this year there have been quite a number.

SMITH. That's what I thought. Charlie wrote me to ask money for so many final degrees, that I thought the poor boy was getting worked too hard—

HOR. (*same business with MR. BLANCHARD'S hat*) Well he has really studied hard, very hard.....

SMITH. And now that he is a real lawyer.....

MARGARET. (*aside seeing her father brushing the hat.*) Father, father? what are you doing? Don't brush that hat! (*she returns to her group.*)

SMITH. Hey? ah to be sure—an old habit!—I beg your pardon.....(*to himself.*) who is the hatter who has turned out this hat, I wonder?—(*looks it all over.*) Mercv—what trash! Oh!.....(*seeing the name inside.*) Ah! well I am not astonished!—he never could turn out a neat job. (*MR. COMPTON takes his hat back with a bow, and the young men giggle together.*)

Enter RYAN.

RYAN. (*announcing.*) Lady Lyndon! Admiral Lyndon!

LYNDON. My dear mother, I am delighted to see you persuaded my uncle to come.

LADY L. It took me some trouble to get him to accompany me.....his wounds are giving him trouble again.

ADMIRAL. (*to MARGARET.*) But I could not resist the pleasure of kissing my pretty niece.

SMITH. (*aside*) The whole family here!.....how lucky I came to-day—we'll all be together!

LADY L. My dear Margaret—you look pale! don't you feel well?

SMITH. (*advancing towards her*) Oh that is nothing ma'am..... I mean my lady. I beg your pardon—she always was so in company—shy, very shy; customers always scared her; she'd rush out of the back store when she'd see plenty of them coming!.....

LADY L. Sir?.....

SMITH Your humble servant, my lady! glad to see you look so well! Why, don't you know me again? T. J. Smith, the hatter!.....why we walked arm-in-arm the day of the wedding.

LADY L. (*coldly*.) Oh certainly.....of course.....excuse me—my eyesight is very weak

SMITH. (*good naturedly*.) It is a great pity.....you ought to wear spectacles—

LYNDON. (*aside*.) I am on red hot irons!—

SMITH. I would have known you anywhere! my eyesight is strong; very; but I have had to wear glasses when at work in the shop—could not have turned out any decent job without. Well I am real glad to see you look so well, barring the eyes—and really it don't show!—Our acquaintance has been very short—but we'll make up for lost time now!—I have come back to settle down for good and we shall see plenty of each other hereafter!—and..... may be—we may have to march again to church together some time or other, eh;—you know—there might be a christening!—such things will happen—what do you say, Maggie, eh! eh!

LADY L. (*to ADMIRAL*) My dear brother—give me your arm. I feel like fainting—I can't stand this!—

ADMIRAL. (*to LADY L. giving his arm*.) My dear sister, I had foreseen all this and warned you; Lyndons cannot marry a Smith without painful incident; money cannot smooth down certain things. It was a rash step to take—but now that it is taken, you must go through it with a good face and like a Lyndon. Now that this honest fellow has been brought into our family he is to be treated with all the respect due to a Lyndon, and I will not stand by (*speaking louder and walking with LADY L. towards the group of young men who are laughing*) and see him insulted. I take him under my

protection and who sneers at him, insults me! (*the group becomes serious and disperses. Exit with LADY L.*)

SMITH. (*who had noticed their giggling, aside*) What on earth are they laughing at?—they are all in evening dress, I see, and I have my traveling jacket on; pshaw! why did not Maggie tell me?—I'll just hail a cab—fly home, and tell the mother to dress up too! (*goes to MARGARET.*) You ought to have told me, Madge, about my dress, but luckily I am up to society manners—I'll slip off, dress and be back in a jiffy!—they won't have time to miss me. At what o'clock do you dine? A late dinner I suppose; five, eh?—six? seven? Well anyhow we'll be here as soon as we can—Where's my hat?

HOR. Here it is!

SMITH. Much obliged. (*Brushing it with his sleeve.*) I'll soon be back Maggie! Gentlemen and ladies, allow me! (*Bowing awkwardly. Exit.*)

LYNDON. (*aside.*) Thank goodness!

Enter RYAN with a letter on a silver waiter for LORD LYNDON.

LYNDON—A letter from the German embassy!

LADY L. That must be our baron's acceptance of the invitation!

LYNDON. (*reading.*) So it is. My dear mother you have been successful!—You'll have been the main spring of my enterprise! Take our company in the drawing-rooms won't you dear mother, whilst I see to a few things with Margaret? (*Exeunt all but LORD LYNDON and MARGARET.*)

LYNDON. Well, my dear, are you not glad of this piece of good luck! The purpose of the dinner is accomplished—Baron Friedgeschildt meets all the financial magnates at my table backed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and before the coffee, he'll be my principal shareholder, perhaps my partner!—why are you so silent! Any other wife would be proud of her husband's success—

MARG. Proud? of what?

LYNDON. Proud of having a husband who is ambitious, plucky, energetic, who forces things to go as he wants them to!—Recollect one thing, my dear wife. In

this world things *must* glitter, though they need not be of gold for all that. But we must dazzle, or fall by our own dullness.

MARG. What do you mean?—

LYNDON. I mean that this enterprise of mine is so considerable, that it is beyond my own means to carry it through—I must attract outside capital, or I risk breaking down in the attempt and endanger my personal fortune involved in it—Capital can only be attracted by a show of success and splendor—well I do not wish to hurt your feelings. but you know as well as I do, that your father's presence, good excellent man as he is, won't be very conducive to display!—

MARG. My father!—

LYNDON. Of course, if would not look nice in me to tell him to keep away—of course he has a right to come into the house and sit at my table, but you, my dear Margaret, could give him with tact, a delicate hint, without hurting his feelings—

MARG. Oh! but Henry, I really can't—

LYNDON. Yes, yes, you can—I know you can do it very pleasantly—I rely on your doing it! I must go and see my cashier and settle some accounts with him.....

MARG. But surely Henry you do not expect me.....

LYNDON. My dear child, I only expect you to take some little interest in my pursuits and help me, that is all—But in mercy's sake, on my return do not let me find you in this dress!—I want my little wife to do me honor! (*kisses her and exit.*)

MARG. (*falling on a chair.*) He doesn't love me any more! if he did, he would not be ashamed of my family; he would like them for my sake!—he used to say, my parents would be his.....I believed him then! how he has deceived me!—

Enter HORACE.

HORACE. (*aside*) Lyndon, has just gone out! Here's my chance—

MARGARET. (*rousing herself and brushing her tears.*) Somebody?—

HOR. Why. Lady Lyndon, tears in your eyes?—Has your husband been harsh to you? I know he is sometimes

subject to fearful outbreaks of temper.....but entrust me with your confidence and I shall fight your battle for you.....

MARG. Thank you.....but there is nothing of the kind needed.....I do not feel well, that's all.

HOR. Let me show you my selection. I hope it will please you—I tried to guess your taste.

MARG. Oh! yes, I had forgotten my husband's present.

HOR. It is his present, of course; but.....I have selected it and you know in such a case, selection is everything. I tried to find what would suit the clearness of your complexion, the brilliancy of your eyes.....

MARG. Mr. Graham?

HOR. And I chose this. It was the finest I could find! Its price is far beyond what Lyndon would think of paying for it, but if you like it, I shall be amply repaid for the balance, by one of your sweet smiles.

Enter SMITH unperceived.

MARG. (*haughtily closing the case and throwing it on the table*) I do not wish to subject you to the reproach of extravagance from my husband; I shall not wear these diamonds!

HOR. What?—not wear them? when I hoped to see you this evening, out-shine by your beauty the richest ladies of the land! And must not the framing be equal to the picture—Let me see your lustrous eyes rival these jewels—

MARG. Sir!

HOR. Ah! you can't be ignorant of their power; if Lyndon does not know how to appreciate the treasure he possesses, others are more worthy of your love.

MARG. Sir! Mr. Graham!

HOR. My dear Margaret, let me call you so.....

SMITH. (*twirling him round.*) How long is this going to last?

MARG. (*rushing to SMITH.*) Father?

HOR. The deuce take him!

SMITH. Is that the way you do in your high-toned company? Make love to the wife as soon as the husband has turned the corner?—

HOR. Oh, Mr. Smith, only a few words of mere gallantry—I did not

SMITH. Oh! then it was only to keep your tongue in practice.

HOR. Indeed, I assure you—

SMITH. That's all right; Don't be scared; I am not going to get angry. It is not worth while—Maggie is quite able to hold her own. She knows better, and if she did not, it is not a spark of your size that will set her on fire!

HOR. Mr. Smith!—

SMITH. I have said all I have to say to you! I wish to speak with my daughter, my dear sir, and shall be very much obliged to you, if you will allow me to do so—

HOR. Why, certainly!—The deuce take that old hatter! A regular marplot! (*Bowing*) Madam.....(*Exit.*)

SMITH. Your husband has queer friends round him—By the by! he is a bad acquaintance for Charlie, I'll have to warn the boy about him—Why, you have not said anything yet about my suit!—I have just bought it at the clothier's on Oxford Street, as I went by, and I sent word to your mother to dress up as there was a big kettledrum here; so you'll see that we shall be about as smart folks as any—Why! that's her voice!—

Enter MRS. SMITH in an elaborate visiting dress and a paper parcel in her hand.

MRS. S.—Never mind! never mind! I see them!—

MARG. (*running to her.*) My dear mother!

MRS. S. My dear, dear child! I was so dying with impatience to see you that I've been running all the way!

SMITH. What have you got there?—

MRS. S. That's a lemon pie from our old pastry cook Johnson, that Maggie used to like so much; I saw one in his window and I got it as I went by—Why, there is no place to put anything here!—(*looks round and at last places the pie on a stand to the R.*)

SMITH. Did my messenger tell you we were sleeping here to-night?—

MRS. S. Yes, indeed—I expect a few parcels here soon—

MARG. (*aside.*) Mercy! I shall never be able to tell them.....

MRS. S. Well Maggie, what is the matter? you don't seem to be glad to see us.

MARG. Oh! mother, how can you say so!—only.....

MRS. S. Only what?—

MARG. I am so sorry to have to receive you with all this crowd.....

MRS. S. Well, it is a nuisance! It would have been so nice to have been all to ourselves; but we'll have a good chat to-morrow!—

MARG. And why not to-day?—

SMITH. Why, how can you?

MARG. (*aside.*) I see my way through! (*aloud*) You know, mother, to-day is your birthday.

SMITH. I know it is?—you're forty to-day old lady, and I am fifty—of course I don't say that before people, because mother says I am only forty-five! and every body knows I am ten years older than her, that makes her.....

MRS. S. And you're not sorry for it either!

MARG. You know, we always used to keep mother's birthday.

SMITH. Of course we did!—

MARG. We can do it to-day too!

SMITH. How so?—

MARG. These grand receptions tire me! My mother-in-law can do the honors much better than I can—and I shall not feel well.....

MRS. S. What's the matter?—

SMITH. Nothing; don't you see it's a dodge to be quiet with us!—

MARG. And we can have a nice cozy dinner upstairs in my room!—

MRS. S. Oh! what a splendid idea! And we'll have the lemon pie all to ourselves!—the big table won't know what they lose! What a pleasant evening we are going to have!—

MARG. And many others like it I hope—Indeed, I have prepared a plan—You see, we could not be quiet and free in this house—with all these servants and such a lot of company in the evening; I think I shall ask you to let me stay with you a few days—

MRS. S. Why, that will be nice!

MARG. I shall be so happy to be once more with you ; I can help you to fix up your new house—we must put in all the old ornaments so as to make it look as much as possible like our dear old home!—I wish you had never given it up ; if you could only have kept it when you gave up the business!—I would so like to see my own room again as it was.....

SMITH. Come, come, you must not grow sentimental—you are a good deal better fixed up here!—

MRS. S. But Tom—she only means that she liked our home—and would like to see it again—Ah! here is our son-in-law!

Enter LORD LYNDON.

LYNDON. (*aside.*) Great heavens?—the mother-in-law now! My dear madam.....

MRS. S.—(*disconcerted*) Madam?.....

LYNDON. (*politely cold.*) My dear madam, I am delighted to see you.....

MRS. S.—My lord.....sir..... son-in-law—I mean—(*to SMITH.*) What is the matter with him?

SMITH. (*to MRS. S.*) Nothing ; business on his mind.

MRS. S. (*to SMITH.*) Well, business never prevents people from being glad to see their relatives!

SMITH. (*to MRS. S.*) Yes, my dear, I think it does—in their world ; you see their business is different from mine.....(*they go on talking aside.*)

LYNDON. (*to MARG. aside.*) Did you speak to them?

MARG. Yes.

LYNDON. Is it all settled?

MARG. I hope so—

LYNDON. Good! (*Loud*) Of course you will excuse me my dear Mr. Smith, and Mrs. Smith too I hope—

MRS. S. That is all right, son-in-law, Maggie told us you had people to entertain to-night and you could not dine with us.....

LYNDON. I am very sorry indeed it should be thus—I regret it exceedingly.

SMITH. So do we—but it can't be helped—and we'll make it up talking about you with Maggie.

LYNDON. How so?—

SMITH. We'll drink the health of the absent!

LYNDON. What does this mean?

MARG. It means, my dear, that I do not feel well, and that I cannot stand the tedious length and noise of your grand dinner party and I have asked my father and mother to dine with me in my room.

LYNDON. (*angrily.*) Why, this is something new now! and you have believed that I shall consent to.....

MARG. Why not?.....I don't see that it makes any difference.....No lady is coming and your mother can preside—

LYNDON. Why the thing is preposterous!—absurd!

MRS. S. How so?—

LYNDON. I insist on your doing the honors of my home to my guests! If I had wished to keep bachelor hall I need not have married.....I insist on your performing your duties as my wife and if anybody else here gives you contrary advice, I shall.....

SMITH. (*with severe dignity.*) One moment, my lord son-in-law! There is but one advice that you'll find us giving our daughter, and that is: obey your husband!—

Enter RYAN.

RYAN. My lord, the carriage of the Lord Chancellor is entering the court-yard.

LYNDON. (*to MARG.*) You hear?—there is barely time for you to reach the drawing-rooms before him—and still in that dress, when I had asked you particularly—

MARG. (*going to SMITH.*) My dear father.....

LYNDON. Come on, come on! there is no time to be lost!—(*he hurries MARG. off. Exeunt.*)

MRS. S. (*after a pause in which they have been staring at each other.*) Well?—

SMITH. Well, Mrs. Smith, what do you say to this?

MRS. S. I say nothing, Tom.

SMITH. What do you think about it?

MRS. S. I think that Maggie is not happy.

Enter RYAN and two servants.

RYAN. (*overhauling the furniture.*) Now set the card table! light the chandelier and mantelpiece! Great

Scott!—what is this stuff? who on earth has left this mess here?

MRS. S. Why that is my lemon pie!.....

RYAN. (*to the servant.*) Carry the thing away!

MRS. S. Stop that! I want my lemon pie!

RYAN Such things ma'am, are not placed in a library

SMITH. (*aside*) I am getting about enough of this!—
(*he sits down*)

RYAN. I am very sorry, my dear sir, but I must have this chair—

SMITH How dare you?

Enter HORACE.

HOR. What is the matter?—Are you wanting in respect to Mr. and Mrs. Smith?—leave the room this instant!—(*aside.*) A nice job I have now on hand!..... I wish Lyndon had done it himself—especially after what happened a few minutes ago between old head-gear and myself.

MRS. S. Why that's Mr. Graham! how are you my dear Mr. Graham! Thomas, have you seen him already?

SMITH. Yes yes, I have both seen and heard him.

HOR. Dear Mrs. Smith, why you are more charming and blooming than ever!

SMITH (*sarcastically*) Always devoted to the ladies, this dear Mr. Horace!

HOR. How sorry I am you did not come a couple of hours earlier!

MRS. S. Why so?

HOR. Oh! because then I could have shown you the reception rooms, the beautiful chandeliers, the draperies and statues, the heavily gilded marble columns, the Landseers, the gains boroughs, the ancestral portraits; Irwin the Bold, killed at Azincourt—and Theobald the deformed who was page to Richard III; and the Lady Helena whose ghost is said to have long haunted the castle of the Lyndons, that was burnt during Cromwell's reign and.....

MRS. S.—And why can't we see all this now?

HOR. Oh! now, you know, the rooms are full of company.

SMITH. (*boiling over.*) How's that?

HOR. (*rather timidly.*) I say, there is such a crowd—and I know you hate it—and you are quite right—a crowd is awful—especially when it is in high society—so stuck up!—so dressed up! so out of the way, you know!—Unless one is accustomed to it, it is a dreadful ordeal; you show real good taste in avoiding it if I could do so, I should go too, far from all this noise and revelry and enjoy myself amid the calm poetry of nature—A farm would be my home—rising with the lark—eating with the pigs—retiring with the chickens.....This dinner to-night is a trial to my nerves—highflown manners, fastidious ceremonies—questions of precedence, dry speeches—Ah! how I envy you your free and easy life!—you can go and come as you choose, while we are forced.....

SMITH. My young friend will you tell me what all this is going to lead us to?

HOR. (*stammering.*) I beg your pardon.....

SMITH. I say what do you mean with all your fine sentences?—

HOR. I mean.....I mean.....I don't know.....

SMITH. Well I'll tell you what you mean.....you want to get rid of us

HOR. Oh Mr. Smith, how can you think it possible.....

MRS. S. Why Tom you don't believe.....

SMITH. Why of course; don't you see that that is what he has been aiming at for the last hour?—except that he has not got the courage to say so plainly!—Now let us understand each other, Mr. Graham; you have an interest in my departure, my eyes are too sharp for you! (*to MRS. S.*) Do you know I found this puppy forcing his insulting attentions on Maggie? But if you think that I, Thomas J. Smith, who was not killed at Azincourt, who was not deformed, who was not page to Richard III, who am no ghost and whose castle has not been burnt down under Cromwell, if you think I am going to let myself be turned out of doors by a lackey of your stamp, you are greatly mistaken!

HOR.—Sir !!!

MRS. S. Tom, don't be violent!

SMITH. (*violently.*) Oh! leave me alone, wife! I am

going to see this matter through and if my son-in-law is at the bottom of this, he shall have to speak out for himself!

Enter LORD LYNDON and LADY LYNDON.

LADY L. The Baron is a charming man!

LYNDON. My dear mother, I am so glad you succeeded in bringing him round; I lay the greatest hopes on his interview with the Lord Chancellor—

SMITH. Ah! here you are!—I just want you to.....

LYNDON. (*aside*) What!—still here?—

SMITH. I'll not detain you long. I only want to know if it is by your orders, that this fellow, your head-lackey, was trying to put us out, my wife and myself?—

LYNDON. Why my dear Mr. Smith, you are certainly laboring under a mistake—

SMITH. There is no mistake, my lord. Do you mean to father the insult, or do you not?

LADY L. If my son has thought that perhaps it would be more agreeable for you to.....

SMITH. I am not speaking to you, madam, but to my daughter's husband. Is it true, my lord, that you turn us out of doors?—

LYNDON. Such a word!—

SMITH. The word is all right, if the thing is true! You don't answer, eh?—Silence implies consent..... You see, wife, that his lordship is ashamed to own us; a hatter, laugh!—But he may do as he pleases—he can't help after all, being the son-in-law of a hatter!—You had no business to marry my daughter, my lord; you had no business to promise us we should be all one family; you ought to have told Maggie, "I marry your fortune, not yourself; I despise your parents—I flatter them now, because I need their consent, but I intend to get rid of them as soon as I can!"—Fool that I was! I ought to have resisted you all—I ought to have listened to the advice of my old friend Johnson; I, the head of the family, ought to have been wiser than you all! as it is, I have jeopardized the happiness of my child!—I shall never forgive myself!

MRS. S. (*sobbing*) Oh Tom!

LADY L. (*to HORACE*) Oh! do stop this scene!—

HOR. Come come, Mrs Smith, be more reasonable

than your husband—don't you see he is making mountains out of molehills?—Of course you understand that—your dress.....though very pretty.....next to those of the ladies he e—

SMITH What?—Do you dare to put your word in, you puppy!—I have been calm up to now; but I shall twist your nose off, if you insult my wife!

Enter MARGARET.

MARG. (*hearing the last words*) Insult my mother!—(*throwing herself in Mrs. SMITH's arms*)

SMITH (*striking a table with his fist*) You miserable wretch: you!—

LYNDON. Mr. Smith, this violence.....

SMITH. My lord, if you are a man, you'll renounce this fellow for your friend, for he insults your wife and your relatives (*Mrs SMITH controls her husband.*)

LADY L. What a scandal!

MARG. (*going over to SMITH*) My lord, this is infamous!—as you blush for my parents you must also be ashamed of me!—Do you think I am going to remain in a house from whence they are turned out?—No my lord. Turn me out too, for I shall not leave them!—(*sobbing on Mrs SMITH's shoulder.*) Take me away! take me away!

LYNDON. Madam!

SMITH. (*calmly*) Maggie, your words recall me to reason. I ought not to have let myself be led into violence—I had thoughtI had hoped there was a place for us in our child's home; you have decided otherwise. Lord Lyndon, and you are the master here—Heaven forbid I should raise trouble in your house. Remain here, daughter; your place is by your husband. (*Takes her from Mrs. SMITH and passes her to LYNDON.*) Come, wife!—our son will comfort us for the loss of our daughter!

ACT III

The scene represents an elegant library or lawyer's office desks, bookcases &c. A door leading outside to R—One leading to CHARLES' bedroom to L. In the centre folding doors lead to dining-room—LORRINER at desk.

LOR. Four and two is six, and seven thirteen, how much did I carry?—pshaw! it is all to be done over again!—Well, who would have said that this would be all the writing I would have to do?—Adding up washer-woman's bills. When I came here as master Charlie's clerk, I thought I would write briefs and decline all day long..but we, or at least, the master leads such a racketty life that I am kept busy sending off creditors and have no time for latin—in fact I've lost all taste for it—Sometimes I regret my old trade—mercy! some one coming!—That will be the fifth dun since breakfast!—I must look busy to inspire confidence.....

Enter HORACE, later CHARLES.

HOR. Well, what's the matter?

LOR. Oh! Mr Graham!—oh my master will be very glad to see *you*!—he is in for *you*!

HOR. (*laughing.*) Are you besieged?—Creditors getting obstreperous?

CHAS. (*coming out.*) How are you? As you see I have to be cautious—There is a constant ringing of the bell.....

HOR. Why do you let yourself be annoyed in this way?—Why don't you go to the old folks and tell them you want money?

CHAS. I would not do it for the world!—If they only knew to what extent I have deceived them, they'd never forgive me!—

HOR. Pshaw! why should not you enjoy yourself?—You are bound to have a snug little fortune of your own some day; then, why not enjoy it when you are young? you are only spending your own; you have the same round sum set aside for you as your sister got when she married.

CHAS. By the bye!—have you seen my sister of late?

I have not been there for an age—how is Maggie getting on?

HOR. Lyndon is going to the bow-wows!—ridiculous speculations; crazy to make a grand show to attract investments. I have tried to advise him but it is of no use—he insists on going down hill his own way—I don't go there any more—I hate to see things going to rack and ruin and my friendly remonstrances treated with contempt. So I'll turn my attention to you.

CHAS. How so?—

HOR. I mean to say, I have withdrawn my advice from them and will give you all the benefit of it, though your father does not seem to like me.

CHAS. I can't say he does; he forbade my seeing you.

HOR. Deluded mortal!—I wonder what has given him such a grudge against me?

CHAS. Thanks to you, I have not been there for five days; and yet, poor father, he says he is only happy when I am home with them. I must go to day.

HOR. Pshaw! you'll go to-morrow! I am sure playing the dutiful twice a week is as much as any fellow can be expected to do. To-day we have other things on hand; I think you need my advice and services—Augustus told me you lost pretty heavily at cards last night, after I left—

CHAS. Yes; a regular run of back luck.

HOR. How much?—

CHAS. Seventy pounds; all I had!—and I owe about fifty more—

HOR. Well, you can win it back to-day. He is coming here to lunch.

CHAS. Lunch here?

HOR. Yes—so am I—and Compton is coming, and we expect to have a jolly good time too!—

CHAS. And how on earth am I to pay for this spread out?—I haven't a penny left, and I am over head and ears in debt!

HOR. Well—you have only a word to say and I can get you all the money you want.

CHAS. You? how?

HOR. That's where the friend comes in. I can get a funny old fellow to lend it to you; he has some money to

invest.....and so long as he gets a little interest..... how much do you want?—five hundred pounds?—

CHAS. Well, about that; it would not cover all I owe, but the tradesmen can wait a little longer, and I can get on with that till I draw my allowance from the governor.

H. R. Well, all right—I'll talk him into five hundred. I say Lorriner!

LOR. Sir!—

HOR. Go order a first-class lunch, you understand—with champagne for four!—have it set immediately in the dining-room—Let me find everything in good order when I come back!—(*Exit.*)

LOR. Is that so, sir? Have you lost so much as that last night?

CHAS. Yes—most unfortunate luck.

LOR. If master knew that! Mercy, wouldn't we catch it!—he who only plays backgammon at one penny for every five games—

CHAS. I must turn a new leaf—I hate this life anyhow! when I go to see father and mother I have got to find such a lot of excuses—if they only knew that all this furniture is not paid for, and that I have frittered away all the money they sent me to pay the bills with! How lucky it was that at the time of graduating they were out of town and my sister on her wedding tour!—They took my word for everything and I have deceived them in all!—I *must* get through at the next session!—It is all I can do to keep up the deceit till then!—I *must* get my degree; and I can't study so long as I carry on in this way!—I must put a stop to all this.

LOR. So I am not to order this lunch to-day?

CHAS. Yes, you must—I cannot back out of that; I am in for this, and.....

Enter SMITH and JOHNSON.

LOR. Mr. Smith!

CHAS. Father! (*shakes hands with both.*)

SMITH. Well, my boy, glad to see you! I was strolling with Johnson and I thought I'd show your quarters to him. Look round, Johnson, and see how nicely I've fixed him!

LOR. (*aside to CHARLES*) Mercy sir, get rid of him if you can!—The company will soon be coming; I'll run and order the lunch!—and get out of the way. (*Exit*)

SMITH. Charlie, you haven't been to see us for five days—how so?—Your mother is fretting about you and she said she would call round this afternoon. What's the matter, lad, you look worried?

CHAS. I am not worried father, I'm only a little tired—sat up late last night—had to get papers ready for this morning—I've got to be at a hearing of witnesses at twelve o'clock, and I'll have to leave in a few minutes.....I'm so vexed.....

SMITH. Of course, it's a pity, boy, but that's nothing—We only strolled in to see you by mere chance!—We'll be off directly, for you must keep your engagements punctually.

Enter LORRINER in haste.

LOR. (*aside.*) Still here!—What's going to happen! (*Loud*) Sir, sir, here's the lady of the divorce case with Mr. Claverland!—

SMITH. You've got a divorce case!—

CHAS. Yes.....that is.....no.....I have merely to take some testimony.....

Enter OPHELIA and AUGUSTUS CLAVERLAND.

OPHELIA. Here we are!—

LOR. Hist!—(*aside*) It's the father! You are a client!—

OPHELIA. (*aside.*) I am a what?—

LOR. (*aside.*) You must pretend to come for a divorce case!—

OPHELIA. Oh! I see!—(*aloud*) I did not know you had company—

CHAS. (*introducing.*) My father.....Mrs. Duncan-son, Mr. Claverland—

SMITH. I think I have seen the gentleman before—at Lord Lyndon's, a few days ago—

AUGUST. I think I had the pleasure.....

CHAS. Mr. Claverland, will you step over here, I will show you the papers to be signed—(*walks over to a desk with AUG*)

LOR. (to SMITH.) A very clever young lawyer. He is this lady's attorney in the case.

SMITH. Is he indeed?—

OPHELIA. Your son is a very promising lawyer, Mr. Smith.

SMITH. I am glad to hear you say so, Mrs. Duncanson, though I am sorry to hear you need his services—

OPHELIA. Mine is a most distressing case, sir; my husband has ill treated me so.....threatened my life—robbed me of my children—

SMITH. (*sympathizingly.*) Dear me, dear me, you look so young.....

OPHELIA. Young! oh, Mr. Smith, I am the mother of four children!—Of course I was married at sixteen to the brute.....

SMITH. Is it possible?—And he ill treated you, a mere child?—

OPHELIA. He beat me before we were married three months; he dragged me by the hair about the floor!—bruised me all over! (*aside to LORRIMER*) how long have I to go on in this way? (*to SMITH.*) You see he would get drunk.....and then of course.....you know.....and my little children are away from me—I am trying to recover them. (*LOR. has been to the desk to advise CHAS. who comes up.*)

CHAS. Mrs. Duncanson, will you please read these papers and sign them; I shall have the pleasure of witnessing your signature. (*OPHELIA goes to desk.*)

SMITH. Well, my boy, I see you are busy.....Poor little thing, I really feel for her.....Is she in need of money?.....

CHAS. No, no, she's pretty well off luckily,

SMITH. Glad to hear it—poor child! But I must not detain you—you've to go out besides—so, come on, Johnson! Come round, this evening, Charlie if you can!

CHAS. I will for certain—I shall be free and shall come early, may be for supper!—Good bye!—(*Exeunt SMITH and JOHNSON.* During this scene JOHNSON has been silent, but has been looking round at the people and inspecting the labelled pasteboard boxes in the pigeon holes, finding them empty. except one that contained packs of

cards. When they are finally gone, all burst out laughing except CHARLES.)

OPHELIA The old codger!—how he took it all in!—I could have gone on stuffing him for ever!

CHAS. (*solemnly*) Now—stop just there, Ophelia! I won't hear another word about this!

OPHELIA. All right—but did not I play the fine lady well, Gus!—I was just so prim!... ..ha ha ha!—Let's have a game of cards and give Charlie time to recover from the shock! ha ha ha! (*they sit up stage.*)

CHAS. Mercy, what an escape!.....Oh, if once I can get out of this, I'll take good care never to get into such a fix again—Good Heavens! if father only knew..... Well this *shall* be the last spree.....

Enter MR COMPTON and a YOUNG LADY. (music.)

COMPT. Well, Charlie—here we are.....my cousin from Warwickshire—Mr. Smith.

CHAS. Delighted I am sure—Lorriner one more cover!

*Enter MR. BLANCHARD and a YOUNG LADY.
(music)*

BLANCHARD. Charlie, my boy—a future client for you!.....Miss Flynn—Mr. Smith.

CHAS. Quite welcome.....make yourself at home. Lorriner!—one more cover.

Enter HORACE GRAHAM with two YOUNG LADIES.

HOR. Four more rather, for here are two nice jolly friend of mine—Charlie Smith, my bosom friend.

LOR. Where will this end I wonder?—Now that makes eight, instead of four. I should say it is high time master should reform!—

CHARLES. (*to HORACE.*) Well? and this money-lender?—what about him?—

HOR. It is all right—he is coming in a little while to bring the money and the notes for you to sign. In the mean time if you need some, here is fifty pounds.

CHAS. Much obliged, old boy! (*to AUGUSTUS.*) Augustus, old chap, I owe you forty pounds from last night—allow me.....

AUGUSTUS. Why, Charlie I hope you'll win it back from me soon—I must give you your revenge.

HOR. Of course.....of course; we'll have cards after the champagne—

CHAS. No—I have promised myself not to play any more!—

AUGUST. Get along!—drunkard's vows!—I pledged myself fifty times that way when I lost!—

HOR. So all of us have—and yet we still tempt the fickle goddess, don't we?—

LOR. Lunch is ready!

ALL. Hurrah!—come on!—fun for ever. (*They all dance round the room and exit into back room.*)

LOR. (*alone dancing round with a bust he has taken from the mantelpiece.*) Hurrah, if this is our last spree, old man, we must enjoy ourselves too!—come on! hurrah! hurrrah!

Enter SMITH.

SMITH. (*staring with astonishment.*) Lorriner!—

LOR. Sir?.....Mr Smith!!!.....(*nearly dropping the bust.*)

SMITH. What are you doing there?

LOR. Doing, sir?.....I amdusting the furniture!I was shaking the dust off the old man!—there is so much dust in these rooms—(*aside.*) How shall we ever get out of this?.....

SMITH. Where is my son?.....

LOR. He is.....just gone out—

SMITH. Gone out?.....(*aside*) He said he had to go out—

LOR. Gone out, sir; gone to the court—won't be back till very late, sir; a night session, I think—(*aside.*) That will send him off I hope!

SMITH. (*sitting down.*) Well.....never mind.....I came here to speak to you.....

LORRINER. (*aside.*) Speak to me?—sitting down? Mercy on us—how shall I ever get him away!

SMITH. (*aside.*) Johnson has raised my suspicions—he says he does not think Charlie is practising law.....and that he is deceiving me in every way. I cannot believe it!.....still I must see to this; Johnson is clear—

headed and would not have spoken to me so, if he had no good reasons.....Lorriner!

LOR. Sir?.....

SMITH. Where is my son gone?—

LOR. He is in court, sir—if you go there you are sure to find him, sir.

SMITH. Never mind—I'll stay here—So he has got plenty of work, eh?.....he is kept busy by his clients, eh?

LOR. Why sir, just look here! (*reading off the labels of the pigeon holes.*) Bigamy!—petty larceny!—divorce!—burglary!—fraudulent bankruptcies!.....

SMITH. (*rising*) Fraudulent bankruptcies?—Why that must be interesting!—let me see! (*opens the case.*) Why, there are no papers here?

LOR. The papers?

SMITH. Ye—this is empty.

LOR. Oh! Mr. Charles must have taken them with him!

SMITH. Well but..... I thought young lawyers only got cases through attorneys and solicitors.....

LOR. Of course, sir; we have got two of the best..... here are their cards! Mr. Slinguff!.....you must have heard of him. The great Mr. Slinguff, and Mr. Handford, the great Mr. Handford!—and if you want papers, sir—why, bless us, look here, sir! here is a case of a contested will; look at this!—there now! (*whilst SMITH runs over the papers*) If he only knew that is a sham lawsuit the students debated more than a year ago!

SMITH. (*aside.*) Well this is satisfactory and substantial—I wish Johnson could see this! (*Loud*) Lorriner!

LOR. (*aside.*) Poor man!—He takes it in so!—I do feel sorry for him!

SMITH. Well—but he has not made his first speech yet, has he?

LOR. No sir, not yet; you know sir, lawsuits are long things—may be this winter.....

SMITH. You must let me know when he does—I want to hear him!—but I do not want him to know I am there, it might make him nervous, the dear boy!—Well Lorriner, what you have told me and shown me has done me a world of good; it makes up for a lot of trouble I

have from another quarter!.....(*sighs*) but that has nothing to do here—Take this, Lorriner, (*giving him money.*)

LOR. (*refusing it.*) Oh! thank you sir, but really I could not take it; (*aside.*) I would feel as if it were stolen.

SMITH. You won't take it?

LOR. No sir—please don't—I..... you see, I am a lawyer's clerk now, and.....

SMITH. (*taking it back.*)—too proud eh?—I understand that; I like that kind of pride; you are trying to rise in the world—all right, my boy. I won't do anything to hurt your feelings. I'll think all the better of you for it!—my wife will come here probably; she wanted to take the boy out for the evening, but as he is engaged it can't be to-day; (*going towards the door.*) When she comes tell her I was here.....(*Noise in the next room*) Why, what is that?—there is somebody in the dining room!

LOR. (*aghast.*) Do you think so?

SMITH. Think so?—I am sure!—why, it is Charlie's voice!

LOR. Ah! thenhe must have returned by the backstairs!—

SMITH. I'll go in and see him.

LOR. (*rushing in front of him.*) No sir—no sir!—if he is in, it is on business; law business!—he must be examining witnesses—

SMITH. But I hear ladies voices!—

LOR. That's it!—that is just it!—it must be the bigamy case; that's the two wives—

SMITH. A bigamy case? you did not mention it!—

LOR. I quite forgot it, sir—now I recollect, Mr. Charlie told me he wanted to try and make the two wives come to an understanding!—

SMITH. I should say that must be rather difficult.....

CHAS. (*inside.*) Silence in court!—Miss Julia, you must begin first!

LOR. You see, sir!—you see!—he tells her to begin to explain first! (*singing by a female voice.*)

SMITH. She explains in singing?

LOR. I must be mistaken—it is some other case. Oh—it must be the Italian singer!—

SMITH. (*suspiciously.*) He has a case with an Italian singer?

LOR. Yes, against a reporter!—he went and wrote an article saying she could not sing classic music and she has sued him!

SMITH. Why should she come and sing here?

LOR. I dare say Mr. Charles wants her to sing some real classic music in court, so the jury can judge for themselves.

SMITH. That is a new idea.

LOR. Quite! never been done before!—Mr. Charles relies a great deal on the effect. (*singing of a low popular song.*)

SMITH. So that is the classic music she is to sing?

LOR. (*shows embarrassment—chorus—SMITH shaking him by the ear.*)

SMITH. I suppose the jury is rehearsing the chorus, too, eh?—you lying villain, you take me for an old drivelling dotard, that you hope to deceive me by such tales!

LOR. (*writhing in pain.*) Oh! sir!—please, sir!—my ear, sir!—

SMITH. (*still pulling his ear.*) I feel as if I could twist your neck off. With your meek airs and innocent tales, you nearly got me off the track!—Ah! you are too proud to take money—are you?—how much does my son pay you for lying to me, eh? (*jerking him off.*) Go and fetch my son!.....

LOR. (*holding his ear*) The Lord have mercy on me! what is going to happen?

SMITH. Or rather, no!—I'll go in myself! go in there! (*showing the bedroom door*) and dare to leave it at your peril!

LOR. (*going in*) I've done all for the best. (*Exit.*)

SMITH. (*alone.*) I wonder if Johnson was not right after all?—what if Charles were actually deceiving me, because I am a mere tradesman, ignorant of the path in which I have started him?—I can't believe it of him!—Why should he? I have never denied the boy anything!—he has had all he wanted?—and yet things certainly

look queer, I must say!..... perhaps I have stumbled on some merry making party and Lorriner was afraid to tell me.....it may not be as bad as Johnson would wish me to believe; when I was a lad, I did not have much time for fun, but I enjoyed it all the more when I could get a day. I could find no fault if Charlie gave himself a holiday now and then.....if he works hard as he says he does, I should be glad that he does get some pleasure now and then.....but Johnson insists that he is never doing anything; and that he has fallen into bad company, and systematically deceiving me.....I can't believe it of Charlie!—I won't believe it!—he has always been such a good boy!—well I'll soon know the worst! (*going towards the door, but hearing some one enter turns back.*) Somebody?

Enter SKINNER.

SKINNER. Mr. Charles Smith, if you please?—

SMITH. I am waiting for him myself, sir—

SKINNER. Ah—all right—still at lunch, eh?

SMITH. At lunch?

SKINNER. Yes, with his friends. I know all about it; I can wait too. We must not disturb their youthful pleasures—

SMITH. So, so—it is only a lunch-party!—I thought there was something of the kind going on—(*aloud.*) Who are you, sir?—

SKINNER. Mr. Skinner—Samuel Skinner of Sudbury, not far from Sydenham. I am come on a little business with the young gentleman.

SMITH. Are you a client?—

SKINNER. A client?

SMITH. (*aside.*) He looks like an honest man!

SKINNER. A client? Why, are you acquainted with Mr. Charles Smith?

SMITH. Certainly.....I know him quite well.

SKINNER. Then you must know that there is very little of the lawyer about him!

SMITH. (*uneasily.*) Is that so?.....

SKINNER. Are you one of his trades people?—

SMITH. Precisely.....that's just what I am!—I have provided him with a lot of things; and I daresay, you

are one too—eh?.....you have a bill against him?—want money, eh?

SKINNER. No—there you are mistaken!—I am bringing him some—good news for you, eh?—you have a chance of being paid at last—

SMITH. (*bewildered.*) I don't quite understand you?

SKINNER. Why, you see, I have a little farm, garden and so forth—I love the country, I live on my place—not far from the city; I have a lodger who has saved a few pennies—he is an invalid and he wants to invest his little savings in a profitable way, that will bring him a little more percentage than the bank—and when I come to town he wants me to find some safe investment for his few shillings.....

SMITH. I see; and you are the agent between the two parties.....

SKINNER. For a little consideration!

SMITH. Of course.....and.....this young gentleman here has sent for you?

SKINNER. Yes. His friend Mr. Horace Graham came to fetch me—

SMITH. Mr. Horace Graham?—

SKINNER. A nice young man—has got me several business transactions, I mean to my lodger—but, of course, I am the responsible party—and as such, I must see that all is safe; not that I know much about business—I only understand farming and gardening—The furniture is pretty good here—the books are nicely bound!—the father came down handsomely, to attract clients for his precious lawyer son!.....he he!—do you know the old man?

SMITH. I have seen him sometimes!

SKINNER. A retired hatter—eh?

SMITH. Yes.

SKINNER. A good-natured sort of fellow, eh?—but no great shakes—eh?

SMITH. I beg your pardon?

SKINNER. I mean a kind of poky slow-coach?

SMITH. You think so?

SKINNER. To speak plain English—a darned old fool, like his son!—the chip and the block?

SMITH. (*aside.*) I feel like pitching this fellow out of

the window—only I can get some information out of him!—

SKINNER. Is he as rich as he is said to be?

SMITH. Well—he is comfortably well off—

SKINNER. About fifty?—

SMITH. Round about that?

SKINNER. Is he still in good health?—looks strong, yet?—

SMITH. Strong?—I should think so!—he is solid for thirty years more—and means to be too!—

SKINNER. That's bad!—the young one won't come into his money soon!

SMITH. (*aside.*) You rascal!

SKINNER. The interest will have to be raised in consequence you see!

SMITH. Of course! (*Laughter and noise*)

SKINNER. They are at the fruit and wine, now! they are getting slightly excited.—

SMITH. Is not that the good time for you to do business?

SKINNER. He! he!—I see you understand the ropes!

SMITH. You speak to him first; I can wait!

SKINNER. (*laughing*) All right!—you want to see him after he has some money!—he! he!—we play into each other's hands!—he! he!—

CHARLES. (*from within.*) Lorriner!

SKINNER. He's coming!—(*SMITH retires into the bedroom.*)

Enter CHARLES, excitedly.

CHAS. Lost again? Lost!—on one card!—one card!—(*calling.*) Where is this money-lender?—

SKINNER. Here I am, sir; at your service, sir—

CHAS. Oh! you are the man, eh?—Mr. Graham told me that you would consent to lend me—

SKINNER. Not I, sir—a lodger of mine. I'm only a simple farmer, I mind my garden—

CHAS. What do I care about that?—I want five hundred pounds.

SKINNER. (*handing a note.*) All right, sir—against a note of hand that you will be pleased to sign, at five months date.....

CHAS. Five months!—that is a very short delay.

SKINNER. It can be renewed—you know; we can see to that later.

CHAS. Have you the money with you?

SKINNER. Yes sir—here I have it—(*handing bank notes.*)

CHAS. Give me the paper! (*Is going to sign.*)

SKINNER. You know the terms, of course?

CHAS. No—

SKINNER. Five per cent and a small premium.

SMITH. (*aside from the bedroow.*) He is not such a skinflint as I feared!—

CHAS. That is all right sir, I accept them.

SKINNER. Here are your £300.

CHAS. 300! why I said £00—

SKINNER. Of course—but it is usual to deduct the premium and interest.

CHAS. But five per cent does not make.....

SKINNER. Certainly it does; five per cent a month for three months is £125, and 75 premium, makes 2 0—take two from five leaves three and here you are!—

SMITH. (*aside*) The wretch!

CHARLES. (*rising*) This is an extortion! I'll not sign it!—

SMITH. God be thanked! he has not fallen so low yet!

SKINNER. Just as you please, sir. It is not my business it is my lodger's; I am only a farmer.....but it is the usual rate for risking money without any security.—you'll not find cheaper terms—

CHAS. I'll do without, then!—'I'll not submit to this.

SKINNER. As you please; I wish I had not left my garden to come to town for nothing.

CHAS. (*aside.*) And yet.....I have lost the fifty Horace lent me and I still owe Arthur!—I must pay them immediately; debts of honor—I must borrow! and there is nobody I can ask? (*aloud.*) Here, fellow! where is that paper!—I'll sign it and take your terms.

SMITH. Oh! the fool! instead of coming to me!—

SKINNER. (*counting the notes.*) To-morrow the Dr. of the Life Insurance Company will call on you—it is usual.

CHAS. What for?

SKINNER. You must insure your life—you might die before your father:—of course, it is not probable, thank goodness; but it is the custom.

SMITH. (*covering his face*) Oh!—what a shame!

CHAS. Enough, sir, enough!—take the note—give me the money and go!

SMITH. (*snatching the note from him*) Unfortunate boy! What are you doing?

CHAS. (*staggering*) My father!

SMITH. Yes, your father, who has wanted to see how far misconduct could lead you!

SKINNER. Do you mean to say you are the father?

SMITH. The darned old fool—yes sir.

SKINNER. Oh, if I had known.....

SMITH. You need not apologize—you were perfectly right—I was an old fool to believe in the honesty and straightforwardness of this boy!—I shall not be so however, any longer!—take back your money, sir, and leave us!

SKINNER. One must be indulgent, sir. Young men will be young men—

SMITH. (*in a rage*) Will you go away, yes or no?

SKINNER. (*slowly*.) All right, sir—I wish I had not left my farm for this—next time my lodger wishes to lend money he can do it himself—I only care for my garden—(*Exit.*)

CHAS. (*humbly, as SMITH walks excitedly about.*) Father.....

SMITH. (*stopping short in front of him to expostulate, but being too full for utterance only finds broken words.*) That you.....after all my trust!.....Ah! you are aoh! it's infamous!.....oh!! (*breaks down, tries to struggle with his emotion sits down and sobs aloud.*)

CHARLES. (*rushing on his knees.*) Father! father!..... forgive me!..... I have done wrong, I know; but I'll atone for it allforgive me!

SMITH. (*rising*) Never!.....leave me!—you have hurt me beyond atonement!.....to deceive me in this way!

CHARLES. (*half rising holding SMITH's hand.*) Father, hear me! forgive me! I swear that henceforth.....

SMITH. (*breaking from him.*) Henceforth?—henceforth you'll be nothing to me!—you have injured me too deeply! leave me!—I have not a child left!!!

Enter MRS. SMITH.

MRS. S. Here I am!—here I am!—Good day Charlie!—(*to SMITH.*) I am come alone, but Johnson will be here directly. He came in hurriedly, to say that he had heard some bad news and he wanted to know more about it—Why what is the matter with you both!—eh?—What is the matter with your father, boy?—(*shaking one after the other.*) What is the matter with Charlie, father?—Will you speak out, some of you?.....Charlie, I will have you answer me!—

SMITH. He is not going to answer you—but there is a crowd next door that can answer for him. You do not expect him to tell you that he has deceived us for months and months; lying to us a thousand times, by word, letter and deed!—You do not expect him to tell you that all our hopes are blasted in him—that while we thought he was honestly studying in the career of his choice, he was throwing the money he drew from me on wine, women and cards!—You do not expect him to stand up and say that this furniture, these books and the very coat on his back has remained unpaid, though I sent him good and heavy checks to cover the bills, and though those same bills were forwarded back to me, receipted—by whom?—by himself! to blind me to his reckless road to ruin!

MRS. S. (*sobbing and holding CHARLES' hand whilst he is averting his face*) Charlie, Charlie!—tell me this is a mistake!—

SMITH. Do you wish him to say he is no more a lawyer than you are?—do you wish him to tell you that having run in debt and gambled away all available money, he found no honester way of getting more than by raising money at 60 per. cent on the chance of our deaths!

CHARLES. (*who has been bowed down with grief, turns round suddenly and kneels to his mother, sobbing.*) Oh! no! no! no! not that!—I'm guilty of all the rest, but not of that!—Mother, mother, have mercy on me, if he has not!.....

SMITH. (*throwing the crushed paper he holds.*) There is the note!—and there are the clients of your lawyer son!—(*dashing the door open he discloses the company at the table.*)

MRS. S. Oh! Charlie Charlie—say it is not true!

HORACE. (*comes down stage, slightly tipsy, a glass and napkin in his hands.*) I say, Charlie are you going to be all night with old money-bags?—here's to the innocent farmer and his lodger!—Where is this pastoral usurer?

MRS. S. Why, it is Mr. Graham!

HORACE. (*to SMITH.*) Here, you swindling old jew, give us your money and scoot!—Hallo!—the old hatter!—by all that's crushing!—and the old hatress, too!—Whew!—A nice kettle of fish!—we must put on the best face we can!—Come on and drink with us!—have a glass! we are not proud, not a bit!—the more the merrier! come on!—

CHARLES. (*to HORACE*) Silence Horace! the state in which you are—

SMITH. Why do you interrupt the gentleman? what does it matter to you, that this fellow insults your parents?.....It is not the first time; a week ago after insulting your sister with his unpleasant attentions he turned round and insulted your mother.....

CHAS. Insulted my mother?—(*rushing at him.*) You are a scoundrel!—

HOR. Look out!—what's the matter with you?—

CHAS. Enough I say—(*knocking his glass off.*) If you are not too drunk to see it, I hope you understand that I wish to insult you!—

JOHNSON. (*who has entered quietly a little while before.*) You see for your self, my poor old friend, that I am not entirely mistaken; I am sorry to be a bird of ill omen—unfortunately it seems to be my fate always to bring bad news; I have now ascertained the truth of a rumor I heard this morning, and you must know it, though it will be another blow to you—

SMITH. Say on, Johnson!—nothing can hurt me more than the way I am disappointed in my children—say what you have to say man, what is it?

JOHNSON. Your son in-law, Lord Lyndon, has rushed into speculations, honestly—bravely but recklessly! the

cashier of his bank absconded Saturday night with all the funds on hand ; and here he is, on Monday morning, left to face the situation with his private resources—his liabilities are such, that on the Stock Exchange it is declared this will necessarily bring about the bankruptcy of all his other enterprises.

MRS. S. Merciful Heaven !

SMITH. Poor Maggie !

HOR. Why !.....I could have told you that would be the end long ago !—

MRS. S. (*crying on SMITH's shoulder*) Ah ! these are too many blows all at once !

SMITH, (*sadly.*) We have reaped what we have sown—we wanted to make our children a fine gentleman and lady—

MRS. S. I was the cause of it all, Tom !

SMITH. Never mind—the milk is spilt—it is no use crying now !—Come on, wife !

JOHNSON. Where are you going to ?

SMITH. To Lord Lyndon's to see what I can do for him.

JOHNSON. What ? after the other day's scene ?

SMITH. He is my daughter's husband, and he needs me ! Come on, wife !—(MRS. S. *seeing CHARLES bowed with grief rushes to him and kisses him on the sly. Exit.*)

MRS. S. Here I am, Tom ! (*to JOHNSON.*) Do not leave Charlie alone ; try and learn all you can from him ! (*Exit.*)

HOR. The old man has got grit in him.

CHAS. Yes, and heart too !—and you have got neither !

HORACE. (*scornfully.*) My dear boy, if you are fishing for a fight, you can have it for the asking. .

CHAS. This very instant !—

HOR. No, thanks !—I do not whip puppies after meals—it spoils digestion—you can send me your seconds to-morrow.

CHAS. I shall !

HORACE. (*insolently.*) Oh ! by the by.....you might give your seconds the £50 you owe me—I'll honor your challenge when you honor your debt—besides you had better square yourself all round, for I have an unlucky

knack of being a first-rate shot and a champion swordsman.

JOHNSON. (*advancing*) Mr. Charles Smith owes you £50?—Please have the kindness to draw on me for that amount.

HORACE (*staggered.*) On you? Who the devil are you?

JOHNSON. (*very politely, but looking him straight in the eyes*) Capt. Johnson, of the Merchant Marine Service, and Mr. Charles Smith's second. Here is my card! (*Tableau—Curtains.*)

ACT IV.

*A parlor in LORD LYNDON'S mansion. Sofa and doob to L., a fireplace. Door at the rear; door to R. a tarel with a bell—*MARGARET.

MARG. (*seated on the sofa and holding an open letter in her hand.*) Three o'clock! Ah! here he is!—(*goes to the door and listens.*) No!—not a sound! (*rings the bell, RYAN answers.*) At what o'clock did Lord Lyndon leave this morning?

RYAN. At seven—

MARG. What message did you say he left for me?

RYAN. My lord told me to give Your Ladyship the note as soon as your Ladyship appeared at breakfast—

MARG. He said nothing else?

RYAN. No my lady.

MARG. That's all. (*RYAN bows and leaves—She reads the letter.*) "Do not worry unnecessarily, dear Maggie!"—Not worry!—when he knows that ruin stares us in the face and our name is going to be dragged into the bankruptcy court; (*reading*) "The loss may not be as considerable as I first thought—I have some hopes of warding off the first brunt of the blow—If I succeed in the steps I am now taking I may gain time—and time is everything—All my hopes lay on two friends—if they consent to help me, I may still keep my head above water—I shall come or let you know as soon as I have good news"—(*aside*) it is three o'clock and he is not home yet; that means he has not succeeded.....and he wants me not to worry!—(*Listening*) Ah—this time.....yes—here he is!

Enter LYNDON

MARGARET. (*running to kiss him.*) Well? what news?

LYNDON. (*disconsolately*) Bad!—I have failed everywhere; of the two friends on whom I relied one can't, the other won't..... I thought of a rich old friend of my father's but—he is away on the Continent—they do not know his exact whereabouts—and I can't go telegraphing my ruin at random all over Europe for the very slim chance of his helping me out of it! (*sitting on the sofa*)

MARGARET. (*sitting by him.*) Then you have no more hope?—

LYNDON. No!—Maggie, we are doomed!—this week will see my name in the bankruptcy court and all our property will be seized for the creditors; I see no escape—We can conceal the state of affairs for another day or two—but unless some unexpected friend comes to our rescue, I don't see.....

MARG. Friends?.....we have a great many of them—and you have helped several yourself—but why need we appeal to them—cannot we supply the deficiency from our own resources.....

LYNDON. My poor child!.....all we have between us will not cover one fourth of the bank's indebtedness!—I never involved more in my speculations than I knew I could cover at the worst; and though these failures in the other banks have shaken mine pretty severely, I could have weathered the storm; but now, with this rascally cashier running away with all the available capital of the bank, what remains, when realized at a loss, would not pay sixpence on the pound?

MARG. This is dreadful!

LYNDON. It is, darling—I shall not survive this; it will kill me!—

MARG. (*kissing him.*) O Henry!

LYNDON. You have heard nothing here? No communication from the police, eh?

MARG. None!

LYNDON. The rascal was too sharp for detection. You see he must have stolen the money as he closed the bank on Saturday; that gave him time to cross to the continent Saturday night and to travel all Sunday and the best part of Monday before the detectives were put in

possession of the facts—He can have cashed all the drafts Monday morning before any of us knew of the robbery! As they have not yet caught him, there is no hope for me; he has had time to get out of their reach—if they catch him late it will do me no good—he will have spent the money or concealed it and in the mean time I shall have had to face the world as a bankrupt!—Well, good bye dearest, I must be off again; something might happen if I could only gain time, though I don't see what—I have made a list of my most intimate friends and that is my last resource.

RYAN. (*announcing*) Mr. Claverland is in the library.

LYNDON. (*to MAGGIE.*) He is one of those I thought of!—Tell him to walk in here!—What can bring him here to-day? Perhaps he has heard of the flight of that scoundrel and he comes to sympathize—Courage Maggie—there is hope!—He *could* help me if he wants to—and why should he call now if he does not?

Enter ARTHUR CLAVERLAND.

ARTHUR. Good day, old boy, good day—Lady Lyndon, I am your humble servant—

LYNDON. (*shaking hands.*) My dear fellow, you do not know how much I appreciate your visit at this particular moment.....

ARTHUR. Is that sarcastic? as censure for my absence since your last party? I plead guilty, but, 'pon my word I was contemplating a call, when your kind invitation reached me this morning—

LYNDON. (*aside astonished.*) My invitation?.....

MARGARET. (*aside.*) What does he mean?

LYNDON. (*aside.*) This is a mistake—did you invite him?

RYAN. (*announcing.*) Mr. Compton, and Mr. Blanchard.

Enter MR. COMPTON and MR. BLANCHARD—later ADMIRAL and LADY LYNDON.

COMPTON. Good evening, my dear fellow. (*shaking hands.*) Lady Lyndon, (*bowing.*)

LYNDON I am delighted to see you. (*aside*) Why

what a strange coincidence..... What can bring them all here?—Have they already heard of my trouble, or is it mere chance?—

RYAN. Admiral Lyndon! Lady Lyndon!

LYNDON. (*astonished*) Why! my dear uncle!—

ADMIRAL. Good day, my boy!—(*to MARG.*) My dear little niece, you have certainly got an enormous influence on me, to succeed in getting me to leave my dull home to accept your invitation—I am not like Mr. Claverland here, the pleasures of the table have no longer any attraction for me.

MARGARET. (*aside*) Pleasures of the table?

LYNDON. (*aside*) Her invitation?—

LADY L. My dear daughter, I sacrificed my favorite opera to come to you—But your invitation was so pressing.

LYNDON. (*aside walking up to MARG*) Why then, you have asked them to come?

MARGARET. (*aside.*) No indeed!—I thought perhaps you had?

LYNDON. (*aside.*) I?—I have trouble enough on my mind without thinking of dinner parties—

MARGARET. (*aside.*) What are we to do!—I gave no orders of course—

LYNDON. (*aside.*) This must be a hoax—We'll have to explain.....

SMITH. (*outside.*) Never mind, never mind; I'll go in without being announced!

MARG. My father!

LYNDON. Your father?

MARG. He came to see me yesterday—but he did not want me to tell you.

Enter SMITH.

SMITH. Good day children—ladies and gentlemen. I am happy to meet you.

LADY L. (*aside.*) The old hatter here!

SMITH. (*to LYNDON.*) All right, son-in-law—all right!—I know you did not expect to see me again, after—well, never mind—I have come without being asked though I said I would never cross your threshold again.....but

when I am needed I do without an invitation and sometimes, when it is necessary, I invite others.

LYNDON. (*aside*) It's he who has asked all these people—what does this mean?

SMITH. I see my dear son-in-law that you have here quite a phalanx of faithful friends.....constant and devoted.....I am glad to notice it under the circumstances.

LADY L. What circumstances?

AUGUST. What does he mean!

ADMIRAL. (*aside*) What is the old boy after?

LYNDON. (*to SMITH.*) For Heaven's sake if you have heard something—keep still—before these people—

SMITH. (*aloud.*) Lord Lyndon this is no longer time for concealment, false pride, social vanity and so forth—you must set all that aside—

LYNDON. Mr. Smith?

SMITH. There is nothing to be ashamed of; it is no crime; mere misfortune. Well there—as, I see you have not told them the whole story—I'll tell it for you—but(*turns RYAN out of the room*) just go your ways and don't come until we ring for you!

LADY L. (*aside.*) The old hatter makes himself quite at home.

MARG. Father!

SMITH. Well, my friends, this is the thing—Lord Lyndon has been dabbling in various speculations as you know—all very honestly, with some very fine promise of success, only they have not succeeded, but he might have rigged out of it somehow by himself and the world would not have been the wiser for it—were it not for a rascally cashier by the name of Strand who absconded Saturday evening last, with all the available cash of the bank—(*General movement.*) Yes, a clean sweep; the detectives are after him but very probably too late to catch him—Yes my friend; I am sorry to say it, this places Lyndon on the very verge of bankruptcy; everything being involved he can turn towards nothing to replace the deficiency—he can only rely on his friends; all of us here are his only protection against ruin; as you see, we are very far off from a dinner party—In fact we are all here assembled to see what best each of us can do for him; by

making an effort we can save him. Now gentlemen—the proposals are open!—who speaks first? (*silence.*)

LADY L. This is a most dreadful event!—so unexpected!—

ADMIRAL. Why if a fifty pound cannon-ball had knocked me on the head it could not have upset me more!—

AUGUST. (*to COMPTON.* If that is all we have been invited for!—

SMITH. I see gentlemen, that what I have just said affects you sincerely—this tells well for the goodness of your hearts and the love you all bear to Lord Lyndon—you do not wish it to be said that you were only his friends around his table or in his ball-room—Now you are going to prove yourselves friends in need and friends indeed!

AUGUST. Certainly. (*aside.*) I suppose the old man wants to save his daughter's portion from the general wreck—(*hunts for his hat*)

SMITH. (*aside, seeing MR. COMPTON take his hat and sneak out.*) The exits are beginning—just look at 'em!

AUGUST. (*shaking hands.*) Lyndon—words are useless in such cases; I'll see what I can do for you; my heart is with you—good bye—good bye—(*Exit.*)

SMITH. It would be more practical if he left his purse with you instead of his heart—

BLANCHARD. (*shaking hands*) Lyndon—I am too full for utterance—you understand me—good bye good bye—(*Exit.*)

MARG. Ah! my dear Henry, these are the friends you relied on so much!

LYNDON. Yes—the whole list of them!—all gone!

ADMIRAL. All the better my boy, all the better—you see exactly what kind of friends they are—Now that we are rid of them, and I think it is a blessing, let us hear the facts of the case, my dear sir.

SMITH. As you say, Admiral, let us face the game as it stands—and if possible let us repair the damage among ourselves and keep it hushed up. I think we may succeed in covering the losses between us. To begin with the most serious, and the one that leaves no chance of gaining time is the whole deposit in the bank carried off by the cashier—£70,000.

ALL £70,000 !

SMITH —A deposit—a sacred trust—that can be claimed any minute by the depositors—and that must be paid down to a penny on the spot—or bankruptcy is declared ; and you all know that as soon as the news that the cashier has run away with the money oozes out as it is bound to do, there'll be a rush on the bank. The question is what can we all do, towards supplying the deficiency ?

ADMIRAL. This is terrible !—To have our name dragged into the courts ! I can do nothing to help you !—You know I have no fortune of my own—only my profession ; I was a second son—I live on my pension—I have saved a few hundred pounds here and there—You may have them and welcome—I can part with half my pension !—It will go pretty hard with me at my age, but what is all this, my little all, towards £70,000—it would not satisfy as much as one single creditor.

LYNDON. My dear uncle.....such a sacrifice—

SMITH. (*shaking him by the hand*) Admiral, you are what I call a man !.....

ADMIRAL. I have always tried to be !—Mr. Smith, we'll put down in black and white presently what little I can provide in the emergency—But you my dear sister-in-law, you must be able to do better.....

LADY L. I hope none of you doubt my affection for my son !

SMITH. Of course not, Lady Lyndon, we all know that—and knowing also that your dower portion and private fortune were considerable, I have heard it said you had an income of six to seven thousand pounds—

LADY L. (*mortified and crushed.*) I do not deny it—

SMITH. Well then, by immediately converting the investments into cash you can help us considerably ; lend your son as much of your capital as will be necessary to resist the rush and we shall all pledge ourselves that your income will not suffer from it and we'll do our utmost to restore your capital in its integrity in time !—Let Lyndon bridge over this momentary difficulty and with prudence he can retrieve his fortunes without loss—

LADY L. This is dreadful !—My son, one word with you—

ADMIRAL. Speak aloud, sister—we are all one family here—

LADY L. Well then my son—I have a painful revelation to make to you.....

SMITH. How so?—

LADY L. I have—imprudently, I acknowledge—deprived myself of the means of helping you—but who could foretell what happens now?—how could I guess that my husband's fortune would melt in my hands?—My expenses to keep up my station in society were beyond my income—and as I thought everything looked bright in my son's future I—

ADMIRAL. You don't mean to say you sank your capital in a life interest?

LADY L. (*bowing her head.*) Yes—

SMITH. A life interest and you a mother!

LYNDON. Mr. Smith!

SMITH. Give away your capital!

LYNDON. Mr. Smith, recollect she is my mother!

SMITH. Has she recollected it?

LADY L. Mr. Smith, I have fulfilled all a mother's duties.

SMITH. Those duties end only with death.

ADMIRAL. He is right.

LADY L. Mr. Smith, I may have acted imprudently, as I now see by the ruin of my son; *he* has a right to accuse me.

LYNDON. Mother!

LADY L. But as for you, sir, you must feel safe—your daughter is not involved in my son's ruin. Her fortune is secured by a mortgage of this mansion and its contents—and the sale will amply cover all she brought my son—

SMITH. My daughter's fortune?—Do you think my daughter would help to swindle honest creditors by sheltering herself to their disadvantage? by putting in a full claim on the only available property they can look forward to?—Even if there is a chance for her by law, my daughter considers that her husband's honor is her own; and to pay her husband's debts she'd sell her jewels and her dresses! she'd take to work, if necessary,

rather than be a rich woman but the wife of a bankrupt!—and if she did otherwise I'd discard her forever!

MARGARET. (*embracing him.*) My dear father!

LADY L. Mr. Smith, such noble sentiments! Forgive me for having mistrusted you. In the face of such abnegation I feel powerless—still, I will try; I may perhaps retrieve, in a certain measure the loss of my capital—I must consult my lawyer—and shall do my best to deserve my son's blessing |

SMITH. Lady Lyndon, a willing heart can do much—

ADMIRAL. Come along, sister, I'll help you to fight both lawyers and companies; good bye Lyndon; I'll be back presently and report progress. (*Exeunt.*)

SMITH. (*walking up and down*) I do not doubt their good will—but it won't amount to much! What can be done?—Seventy thousand pounds immediately, without counting the rest.....where can they be raised?—and all by myself!—for I see no serious help around..... Oh! if I were still in business!.....my name on the Stock Exchange would cover all!—but now.....

LYNDON. I have written to my stockbroker to see if he will not negotiate some shares and obtain delays on their payment; he was absent, but I expect his answer any minute. *Ente RYAN with a letter and exit.* Ha!—this is his answer!—(*opens the letter feverishly.*)

SMITH. (*aside observin ghim.*) He grows very pale!—

MARGARET. (*running to LYNDON.*) Well?—

LYADON. (*folding the letter and pretending satisfaction.*) Well, my dear. there is hope—great hope! He wants to see me to discuss matters.....I am going immediately—I must take some papers from my desk—I shall be back ptesently. (*goes in at R.*)

MARG. O heaven grant this hope may be real! (*to SMITH who has been looking through the chink of the door.*) Father, what do you think?—do you doubt his succeeding?

SMITH. (*very serious, gazing intently at the door and waiviny her back.*) No—I have no doubt; I am very sure now—

LYNDON. (*re-enters, pale and his coat buttoned up closely—he takes his hat and kisses MAGGIE nervously.*) Good bye, good bye.

MARG. You'll return immediately, won't you?

LYNDON. Of course, of course—And you sir, I have been very ungrateful towards you; I have repulsed your affection and your friendship, can you forgive me?

SMITH. (*holding his hand and retaining it.*) On one condition!.....

LYNDON. Which?

SMITH. Give me the letter you just received—

MARG. The answer of the stockbroker?

SMITH. Yes.

LYNDON. But that letter.. ..

SMITH. That letter was an absolute refusal!—do not deny it, I saw it in your countenance!

MARG. He was deceiving me!

SMITH. And his farewell to you was an eternal one!—

MARG. What?

LYNDON. Mr. Smith!

SMITH. No use denying. I have seen you!—Give me that pistol you took out of your desk!.....

MARG. (*falling on her knees.*) Ah!

LYNDON. (*trying to extricate his hand.*) Mr. Smith!

SMITH. (*opening LYNDON's coat and taking the revolver.*) Come, come, I want that pistol!—(*letting go his hold on LYNDON who flings himself on the sofa and buries his head in his hand.*) Killing yourself, forsooth! a fine way to pay your debts!—What is to become of your creditors?—Having lost their money, do you wish to deprive them of the only security left them, your honor, your honesty and your life?—Your death at your hands *now*, would be nothing but a cowardly swindle!

LYNDON. (*starting up.*) Mr. Smith!

SMITH. That's it!—be a man! Face your trouble like a man, and do not leave weeping women to struggle through the misery you have not dared to face!—Do your best, and we'll all help you!—I can sell all the property I have only just bought—a clean sweep of my investments may cover all your immediate trouble. Then, I am still hale, my head is clear—my health is good—my commercial reputation perfect, it is not too late for me to re-enter business, and T. J. Smith will be a hatter again!

MARG. My dear father!

Enter CHARLES.

CHAS. I hope I am come in time!

SMITH. (*sternly.*) You here, sir?

CHAS. Father, let me earn your forgiveness!—Listen to me, I am not here for my own account; Augustus has just left me after telling me the utter ruin that faces Lyndon. He is my brother-in law—my sister's husband.....

SMITH. Well, sir?—

CHAS. Am I right, when I say that you had set aside for my future establishment a sum equal to my sister's dowry?

SMITH. So I have.

CHAS. Well then, allow me to dispose of it in favor of Lyndon, to bridge over this difficulty. He can return it later—

MARG. You dear brother!

SMITH. (*shaking his hand.*) That's my son again—now I know you, Charlie.

LYNDON. I can't accept it!—I won't bring ruin all round me in this way—

SMITH. You *must* do it, my dear Lyndon; save the family name and honor first—you can then take steps to repay us!

Enter MRS. SMITH out of breath, followed by LADY LYNDON and ADMIRAL—later LORRINER and JOHNSON

MRS. S. Oh, Mr. Smith if you only knew!.....Oh, Maggie, just fancy.

MARG. What?

SMITH. What's the matter?

MRS. S. The matter?—Oh, mercy I am so out of breath.....I met Lady Lyndon and brought her back and it nearly made her faint!.....

SMITH. What is it anyhow?—

MRS. S. You know Johnson had left London last night to go to Southampton to see his old vessel sail under her new captain.

SMITH. Well, what about Johnson?—

MRS. S. The dear, good old soul that he is!

SMITH. Never mind his soul! Has anything happened to his body?—

MRS. S. Of course not—You know he took the train—he is coming to tell you himself—Oh my! I have no breath left. I ran so fast! (*sits down.*)

Enter LORRINER rushing in.

LOR. It is perfectly true, Mr. Smith!

SMITH. What is?

LOR. What Mrs. Smith has just told you!

SMITH. She hasn't said a thing, except that Johnson is—

LOR. Exactly, sir? He is come back!—

Enter JOHNSON.

JOHNSON. And brought company with me!—Your friend Strand, my lord!

ALL. Strand? the cashier?

JOHNSON. In the train I noticed a fellow who answered your description—I kept my eye on him without really expecting I should be lucky enough to hit on the right man; he went on board my old vessel; I followed him when he registered his name—He laid his hat beside him and as he paid his fare my eye happened to glance at the inside and I recognized a T. J. Smith mark on it.

SMITH. One of my hats!

JOHNSON. Yes, and also a large S. At that moment he gave his name to the clerk as Blandford—I involuntarily touched the hat to see if it was not a B. instead of an S., when my man sprang like a tiger and tried to snatch it from me. A sudden inspiration struck me I said: "Your name is not Blandford!" "Here is an S!" A regular struggle for the hat ensued, his anxiety to recover it confirming my suspicions; at last I attempted to snatch the initial off to show the by-standers, when the whole lining came with it.....

SMITH. (*exultingly.*) That's my double lining patent!

JOHNSON. But I don't think you lined many hats like that one!

SMITH. All my hats are made alike!—

JOHNSON. But this one had stuffing in it! When the lining came off, what should drop out but a perfect deluge

of bank notes, shares, bills and so forth!—just like a legerdemain trick.

LYNDON. What? the money recovered?

JOHNSON. The whole amount! In a flash there were ten hands on his shoulders and about ten people on their knees picking up the bills! A few minutes after, he was in Southampton jail and the money in Southampton bank!

LYNDON. Capt. Johnson, you have saved my life!—
(*General handshaking.*)

SMITH. Nevertheless, after this scare T. J. Smith will re-open his business.

CHARLES. And it shall be called T. J. Smith & son.

SMITH. That's my boy! Be a good hatter rather than a bad lawyer!

JOHNSON. And I shall be the Co.

LOR. And I'll be foreman again!

MRS. S. And we shall all be good friends at last!

LADY L. All one family, Mrs. Smith—you have all proved to us that you were ours, both heart and soul!

MRS. S. You must come and see us.

LYNDON. (*to MRS. SMITH.*) Mother, you shall be satisfied with your children!

SMITH. Mother!—he has said mother!—The stiffness is all gone out of him! Now you are my son-in-law!—We shall not visit you and trouble you—You'll come to us on Sundays when we are at leisure and during the week—(*to the public*) T. J. Smith will be at his old stand, glad to welcome his old customers and friends.

(*Curtain.*)



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